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ABSTRACT

This book focuses on the forces that will shape education politics and policy into the 21st century. Ten chapters written by prominent educators center on the roles to be played by education professionals, local citizen groups, government agencies, and business leaders in shaping education policy, responses to racial and ethnic segregation, school restructuring, technology utilization, and the development of education politics and policy. The introductory chapter by Margaret E. Goertz examines the changing social, economic, technological, and political environment shaping education politics for the 21st century, and provides an overview of the contents of this book. David Clark and Terry Astuto predict no change in direction for federal education policy in chapter 2. In chapter 3, Gary Orfield and Lawrence Peskin, in their discussion and description of the "Atlanta Compromise," argue that if attempts are not made to integrate urban schools, poor and minority children will be condemned to attend schools that are both separate and equal. Chapters 4 (Thomas Timar) and 5 (Mary Metz) explore political, institutional, and cultural forces that shape school restructuring efforts. In chapter 6, Philip Piele examines the utilization of technology in the classroom and argues that technological innovation will not begin to change schools until it offers an educationally viable, cost-effective alternative to the classroom teacher. Chapters 7 (Kent McGuire) and 8 (Carol Ray and Rosalyn Mickelson) explore the role of business in education reform. In chapter 9, Ian Birch and Don Smart examine the forces of change in Australian education politics. The final chapter ends with a historical review of the foundations of the politics of education and an appraisal of issues likely to control policy making in the years ahead. (JAM)

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Education Politics for the New Century

Edited by

Douglas E Mitchell and

Margaret E Goertz

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Education Policy Perspectives Series

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Education Politics for the New Century

Education Policy Perspectives

General Editor: Professor Ivor Goodson, Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario, London, Canada N6G 1G7

Education policy analysis has long been a neglected area in the UK and, to an extent, in the USA and Australia. The result has been a profound gap between the study of education and the formulation of education policy. For practitioners, such a lack of analysis of new policy initiatives has worrying implications, particularly at a time of such policy flux and change. Education policy has, in recent years, been a matter for intense political debate – the political and public interest in the working of the system has come at the same time as the breaking of the consensus on education policy by the New Right. As never before, political parties and pressure groups differ in their articulated policies and prescriptions for the education sector. Critical thinking about these developments is clearly imperative.

All those working within the system also need information on policy-making, policy implementation and effective day-to-day operation. Pressure on schools from government, education authorities and parents has generated an enormous need for knowledge amongst those on the receiving end of educational policies.

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EDUCATION POLITICS FOR THE NEW CENTURY

The year 1989 marked the twentieth anniversary of the Politics of Education Association (PEA). Over the twenty years PEA members have become widely recognized as sophisticated analysts and reliable consultants on the problems and prospects of school improvement and reform.

The 1989 Yearbook, *Education Politics for the New Century*, commemorates the PEA's first twenty years by concentrating on the changing social, economic, technological and political forces that will shape education politics and policy into the twenty-first century. The Yearbook focuses on the roles to be played by education professionals, local citizen groups, government agencies and business leaders in shaping education policy, responses to racial and ethnic segregation, school restructuring, technology utilization, and the development of education politics and policy.

Education Politics for the New Century

The Twentieth Anniversary Yearbook of the Politics of Education Association

Edited by

Douglas E. Mitchell

University of California at Riverside

and

Margaret E. Goertz

Educational Testing Service

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Douglas E. Mitchell is Professor of Education and Director of the California Education Research Co-operative at the University of California, Riverside. Education policy at the state and local levels has been the main focus of his research. In addition to a ten-year interest in labor relations, he has studied issues of social science utilization, state legislative decision-making, and citizen influence in the schools. His most recent books are *Culture and Education Policy in the American States* (co-authored with Catherine Marshall and Frederick Wirk, 1989, Falmer Press), *The Changing Idea of a Teachers' Union* (co-authored with Charles T. Kerchner, 1988, Falmer Press) and *Work Orientation and Job Performances: The Cultural Basis of Rewards and Incentives* (co-authored with Flora I. Ortiz and Tedi K. Mitchell, 1987, SUNY Press).

Margaret E. Goertz is Director of the Education Policy Research Division of Educational Testing Service. She is a policy analyst specializing in the area of education finance and governance. Goertz has published numerous articles and research reports on state and federal education policy and finance and is co-author of *Education and American Youth: The Impact of High School Experience* (1988, Falmer Press). Her current research focuses on the development of state and federal education indicators systems.

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Completing this Twentieth Anniversary Yearbook for the Politics of Education Association leaves us with a real sense of satisfaction at having explored the frontiers of school politics and identified the features that will dominate the landscape of scholarly research and analysis for the remainder of the century. We are particularly grateful to the scholars who have written the eight invited chapters. They responded to our invitation to participate with enthusiasm for the project and with grace when we had to press for closure on the final text. We are also grateful to William Boyd who, as president of the Politics of Education Association, conceptualized the need for a book that takes a prospective look at issues and forces that will dominate politics in years to come. Without Bill's leadership this project would not have been clearly conceptualized and might never have been completed.

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DEM and MEG.

About the Editors and Contributors

Douglas E. Mitchell is Professor of Education and Director of the California Education Research Co-operative at the University of California, Riverside. Education policy at the state and local levels has been the main focus of his research. In addition to a ten year interest in labor relations, he has studied issues of social science utilization, state legislative decision-making, and citizen influence in the schools. His most recent books are *Culture and Educational Policy in the American States* (co-authored with Catherine Marshall and Frederick Wirt, 1989), *The Changing Idea of a Teacher's Union* (co-authored with Charles T. Kerchner, 1988) and *Work Orientation and Job Performances: The Cultural Basis of Rewards and Incentives* (co-authored with Flora I. Ortiz and Tedi K. Mitchell, 1987)

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Terry A. Astuto is Associate Professor of Education in the Curry School of Education, University of Virginia. Along with David Clark she has published a series of reports documenting educational policy changes during the Reagan administration. She is director of the Virginia Educational Policy Analysis Center. Recent publications have dealt with reform in the preparation of educational personnel and alternative views of organizational theory.

Ian Birch is Associate Professor in the Department of Education at the University of Western Australia and co-Director of the Rural Education Research Unit at that university. His primary area of teaching, research and supervision is governance of education, with particular interest in law and education. He is the co-editor of a forthcoming book that examines school law in eight countries.;

David L. Clark is William Clay Parrish Professor of Education in the Curry School of Education, University of Virginia. Along with Terry Astuto he has published a series of reports documenting educational policy changes during the Reagan adminsitration. Recent publications have dealt with leadership in restructured schools, reform in the preparation of educational personnel, and alternative views of organization theory.

Kent McGuire is a visiting professor in the School of Education, University of Colorado at Denver. His teaching responsibilities and research interests are in the areas of education finance, governance and policy. McGuire has recently participated in several projects investigating private sector involvement in education, including an evaluation of business-education collaboratives in urban school systems. At present, he is conducting research on education finance reform legislation in Colorado. McGuire was formerly a senior analyst at the Education Commission of the States.

Mary Haywood Metz is a sociologist who is Professor of Education Policy Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her latest book, *Different by Design: The Context and Character of Three Magnet Schools* (1986) is an ethnographic study of distinctive qualities in the internal lives of three magnet middle schools and of the organizational and political changes and conflicts surrounding magnet schools in the urban district of which they were a part. She is currently writing about similarities and differences in teachers; work in schools located in communities of differing social class.

Roslyn Arlin Mickelson is Assistant Professor of Sociology and an adjunct assistant professor of women's studies at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Her research interests include race, class, and gender equity in educational processes and outcomes. Her article 'The Attitude-Achievement Paradox Among Black Adolescents' recently appeared in *Sociology of Education*. Currently, she is investigating corporate sponsored school reforms and their implications for educational equity.

Gary Orfield is Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago. His present research focuses on policy issues relating to educational equity for minorities, school desegregation and integration in metropolitan areas and employment issues. He has testified before state and federal legislatures and agencies regarding desegregation policies and job training. He is presently serving as court appointed expert and monitor of the San Francisco Unified School District's integration program. His recently completed Metropolitan Opportunity Project report, which examined desegregation practices in a number of major American cities, will soon be published in book form.

Lawrence Peskin is a 1988 graduate of the University of Chicago, graduating with honors in Sociology. He was a member of the Metropolitan Opportunity Project staff and his senior thesis, 'Separate But Not Equal', examined issues of race, class and educational performance in Atlanta's public high schools. He is presently a reporter for the *Foster's Daily Democrat*, a Dover, New Hampshire newspaper.

Philip K. Piele is Professor of Educational Policy and Management and Director of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management at the University of Oregon. His teaching and research interest include law, politics, and information systems. He wrote the chapter on local area networks for the Eighty-fifth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (1986) Part I — *Microcomputers and Education*. He is editor of *School Leadership: Handbook for Excellence* (with Stuart Smith, 1989). Piele serves on the editorial boards of several professional journals and the editorial advisory committee for *West's Education Law Reporter*.

Carol Axtell Ray is Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She is an organizational sociologist interested in changing management techniques and labor processes. Her most recent article is 'Skill Reconsidered: The Deskilling of Managers' which appeared in *Work and Occupations* (1989). Her current research examines corporate sponsored school reforms and their linkages with the expansion of low wage jobs.

Don Smart is Associate Professor in Politics of Education and Policy Studies at Murdoch University in Western Australia. He is the author of numerous books and articles on the role of the Australian federal government in education and co-author of *Education Policy in Australia and America: Comparative Perspectives* (1987). He is currently studying the federal restructuring of higher education in Australia.

Thomas Timar is Assistant Professor of Education in the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Riverside. His current work focuses on educational reform issues, particularly within the context of state and local political and policy environments. He was an educational consultant for the California State Legislature and served as principal investigator of the Law and Education study at Stanford University. He is co-author of *Managing Educational Excellence* (1986).

The **Politics of Education Association** (**PEA**) promotes the development and dissemination of research and debate on educational policy and politics. **PEA** brings together scholars, practitioners, and policy-makers interested in educational governance and politics; is affiliated as a Special Interest Group with the American Educational Research Association (AERA); and meets each spring in conjunction with AERA's annual meeting. The annual membership dues for **PEA** are $US20.00. Members receive a copy of the annual Yearbook and the *Politics of Education Bulletin*, which includes news on member activities and occasional short scholarly pieces. Membership dues should be sent to Robert Wimpelberg, **PEA**, College of Education, University of New Orleans, New Orleans, LA 70148, USA.

POLITICS OF EDUCATION ASSOCIATION YEARBOOK 1989, 1-9

Education Politics For The New Century: introduction and overview

Margaret E. Goertz
Educational Testing Service

The year 1989 marks the twentieth anniversary of the Politics of Education Association (PEA). The PEA was founded by a small group of political researchers at the 1969 meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). It has remained an AERA special interest group (SIG) ever since, serving as a discussion forum and collegial organization for scholars and policy professionals interested in the dynamics of school program and policy formation. Initially, the PEA had few members and generated only modest interest among the broader AERA membership. Over its twenty year history, however, the political foundations of schools have become obvious to all. As a result, PEA members have become widely recognized as sophisticated analysts and reliable consultants on the problems and prospects of school improvement and reform.

This yearbook, *Education Politics for the New Century*, commemorates the PEA's first twenty years. Rather than take the usual retrospective look at the developments responsible for the current state of affairs, we have chosen to focus on the forces that will shape education politics and policy into the twenty-first century. This introductory chapter examines the changing social, economic, technological and political environment shaping education politics for the twenty-first century, and provides an overview of the contents of the book.

The changing environment of education politics

Education politics in the twenty-first century will be shaped by fundamental changes in its social, economic, technological and political environment. Twenty years ago, education was just reaching the end of a quarter century of rapid growth. As the post-war baby boom generation matured, reducing population pressure on the schools, education achieved fiscal stability just as political pressure for change began to expand rapidly. Today, the school-aged population is smaller, poorer and more racially and ethnically diverse. Declining test scores throughout the 1970s undermined public confidence in the country's public school system and led business leaders to question the quality of the nation's future workforce. An eroding US position in the international economy turned policy makers' attention and energies to issues of efficiency, choice and excellence in education and away from earlier concerns with equity. Policy leadership thrust upon the federal government by the Russian *Sputnik* launching and the Supreme Court's desegregation rulings has shifted back to the states where fragmented and diffuse interest groups compete for control of the education agenda.

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The changing social environment

The social environment of education politics encompasses the nature of the population to be educated and society's expectations for its schools. Both have changed dramatically in the last two decades. Between 1968 and 1987, the proportion of White students in American public schools declined sharply, while the proportion of Blacks increased slightly and the proportion of Hispanics doubled (Orfield 1988). Members of the Class of 2000, (now in the second grade) present real challenges to the educational system. One in four is poor, one in three is non-White or Hispanic, one in five is at risk of becoming a teen parent, and one in six lives in a family where neither parent has a job (Edelman 1988). Three in five of these students will live in a single-parent household sometime before their eighteenth birthday (Hodgkinson 1985).

These changing demographics have created an 'imperiled generation' of children (Carnegie Foundation 1988). Levin (1986) estimates that almost one-third of today's school children are educationally disadvantaged. This proportion will rise as more children enter school from poverty households, from single-parent households (specially those headed by teen-aged mothers), and from minority backgrounds. The educational problems of these children are confounded by their growing racial and economic isolation from mainstream society. While the level of segregation of Black students was unchanged between 1972 and 1984, the percentage of Hispanic students attending 'majority-minority' schools climbed. By 1984, nearly one-third of Black and Hispanic students attended schools that were 'intensely segregated', that is, 90% or more minority, and more than two-thirds attended schools that were more than 50% minority (Orfield 1987). The two separate societies – one White, one Black and Brown; one rich and one poor – envisioned by the Kerner Commission twenty years ago may become a reality in the twenty-first century.

Shifting demographic patterns also threaten education's political support in the state and federal policy arenas. As the nation's population ages, fewer individuals have a direct stake in the public education system (as parents or employers). Moreover, those population groups with the largest vested interest in education are those with limited political power – low income and minority citizens. Increasingly, education must compete for resources with public policy issues of interest to senior citizens and voters without school-aged children (Kirst and Garms 1980).

Social values about education have changed as well over the last twenty years. At a time when the number of disadvantaged students in our nation's schools is growing, society has retreated from its commitment to equal educational opportunity. A quarter century ago the civil rights movement heightened public awareness of inequities in society and passage of the Civil Rights Act (1964) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, 1965) focused federal government attention on issues of equality of educational opportunity. The education reform movement of the 1980s, however, has redirected attention to excellence and choice. New educational policies emphasize higher educational standards: more coursework, particularly in mathematics and science; more homework; longer school days; better teachers; higher levels of minimum proficiency and parental choice. There are signs that a renewed interest in issues of equity is emerging as educators begin to address the problems of persistent dropout rates and differential performance between minority and majority students. Equity interests, alone, are not responsible for this interest in at-risk youth, however. Business leaders join in this emphasis out of a concern for national security and economic development as least as often as they seek to revitalize the equity concerns of the last generation. Thus, even in

addressing the issue of at-risk students, the tension among the values of equity, excellence, efficiency and choice remains.

The changing economic environment

The education reform movement of the 1980s was dominated by economic concerns: declining US competitiveness in an international economy; low industrial productivity; and changes in the skill level, size and composition of the nation's labor force. Worker productivity must continually increase for the United States to compete successfully in the global economy. Yet employers in both large and small businesses in the United States decry the lack of preparation for work among high school students. At a time when workforce skills are growing increasingly complex and undergoing rapid change, too many students lack the necessary reading, writing, mathematical and problem-solving skills to meet entry-level job requirements (CED 1985). American students fare poorly on international assessments when compared to their peers in other nations, especially other industrialized countries. Students in foreign countries take more mathematics and science, spend more time in school and do more homework. Equally important, employers complain about large numbers of young workers who lack the core values associated with labor market success.

The poor educational preparation of students will intersect with the changing demographics of the United States in the next decade. In the 1960s and 1970s, the baby boom and the entrance of women into the labor market generated a plentiful supply of qualified entry-level workers. In the 1990s, the pool of new workers will be smaller. High schools will graduate 20% fewer students in 1990 than in 1980, and the proportion of women in the workforce will not grow as quickly as in past years. As poor and minority individuals come to constitute a larger and larger portion of the labor force, policy makers must address the educational needs of the disadvantaged. 'Business leaders have come to understand that the emerging labor supply problem is essentially an educational problem' (Timpane 1984 p: 390).

The changing technological environment

Changing technology *in the workplace* has major implications for *what* the next generation of students need to learn. Changing technology *in the schools* can have a major impact on *how* we teach them. Much has been written about the promise of the computer in the classroom. Some computer advocates even envision a future without schools. Papert, for example, argued that 'the whole system [of schools] is based on a set of structural concepts that are incompatible with the presence of the computer' (1984). Others, while acknowledging the proliferation of computers in schools, question whether children will receive a better education with the help of computers than their parents did without them (Peterson 1984).

The introduction of computers in the classroom has been a unique educational innovation. Unlike most innovations, the stimulus for adoption came from a combination of outside business interests and rank-and-file teacher enthusiasm. Formal curricula and state level support have come slowly. Parents who witnessed the computerization of the workplace feared that their children would not be competitive in school or in the workforce if they were not computer literate. As schools purchased computers, often with

funds raised by parent groups or from federal compensatory education programs, educators struggled to identify the best way to use the new technology. Administrators use the machines to simplify basic administrative tasks, such as attendance, scheduling and reporting grades. Instructional use includes drill and practice, computer programming and computer literacy. Math and science teachers tend to use the machines more for instruction than English, social studies and foreign language teachers, reflecting in part differences in the availability and quality of instructional software (Cuban 1986). Recent developments in technology have expanded beyond the microcomputer to include interactive distance learning systems that combine one-way video and two-way audio instruction.

The introduction of computers and distance learning technologies raise the same set of knotty issues for policy makers and educators that accompanied earlier technological innovations, such as instructional television and language labs (Cuban 1986). The first concerns the equitable access to the new technologies. There is a great deal of variation in which schools have the needed hardware and how it is used. Wealthier suburban communities, for example, have more computers and use them to teach computer programming and enhance academic instruction. The few computers available in poor urban schools are dedicated to drill and practice in remedial education programs. With inequitable distributions like this, the new technologies may widen, rather than narrow, achievement disparities between the haves and have-nots.

The second issue involves the cost-effectiveness of innovative technologies used in instruction. We have little research to date that shows whether computerized instruction or interactive video instruction teaches students knowledge and skills more efficiently and effectively than other instructional alternatives.[1]

The third issue is how technological change affects schools, organizations, teaching practices, and teacher-student relationships. Will computers and video images enhance the role of the teacher in the classroom or further the mechanization of teaching? Will computers or other new educational technologies replace teachers or only expand the work roles of those who use them? Finally, what is the impact of an interactive video or computer learning environment on what children learn? What are the intended and unintended consequences of high technology learning on the acquisition of values, knowledge and skills?

The changing political environment

The political environment of education has also undergone critical change in the last two decades. Three major trends are important to note as we move into the twenty-first century: the changing roles of the federal and state governments in education policy; the growing political and programmatic fragmentation of education; and the re-emergence of non-education interests, particularly business, into the education policy arena.

While the federal government has always played a modest role in public education, federal involvement expanded rapidly in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Two issues stimulated this expansion: curriculum development and equality of educational opportunity. Implicit in the design of federal programs was the belief that education could shore up the national security and break the cycle of poverty. Although federal aid to education never exceeded 9% of all spending on elementary and secondary education, the impact of its financial contribution was far-reaching. The Reagan administration, however, significantly reduced and redefined the federal role in education in the 1980s.

During the Reagan years, the federal government sought to influence education policy with moral suasion rather than federal aid; to emphasize demonstration over intervention; and to decentralize the administration of federal programs.

As the 1980s unfolded, abandonment of education by the federal government created a leadership as well as a financial vacuum. Politics abhors a vacuum, so state level education policy makers, headed by a group of reform-oriented governors, undertook an education reform movement that sought to operationalize the federal exhortations of excellence and choice. The policies that emerged from state legislatures, however, were shaped by a new configuration of education interests. Unlike the 1960s, when education politics was the province of broad-based education interest groups (state education departments, schools of education, superintendents, administrators and teachers), the 1980s reform was dominated by business leaders and elected public officials. In earlier years, groups like the Educational Conference Board in New York State and the Princeton Group in New Jersey sought to build consensus among educational interests on the policy goals and legislative priorities in their states. The growth of collective bargaining for teachers and creation of interest groups organized around new categorical education programs shattered this consensus, however, replacing it with competing centers of power – teacher unions, administrator groups, bi-lingual, Title I (now Chapter 1), and special education advocates. These groups confronted new centers of power in recently activated business groups. The absence of a broad consensus about the purpose of education led to a patchwork of state education programs to meet the demands of different and often competing interests. What was unique about the politics of state education reform in the mid-1980s was the relatively unimportant role of education interest groups in the formulation of new state policies. While opposed to specific aspects of the new reforms, education groups were stymied. Strong public and business support assured backing from governors and state legislators. The knowledge that increased state aid generally accompanied reform provisions made educators reluctant to 'bite the hand that feeds them'. Moreover, the fact that some members of their diverse constituencies favored reform efforts kept professional opposition from becoming well organized (Fuhrman 1988).

As we approach the twenty-first century, we face a number of unanswered questions. Will the federal government remain a passive player in the education policy arena? If so, who will champion equal educational opportunity? Will education regain control over policy and school finance in the state political arena? Is meaningful education reform possible in fragmented local and state policy environments?

Overview of the Yearbook

The chapters presented in this Yearbook address some, but not all, of the issues facing education policy makers as they move into the next century. Some issues, such as excellence and choice, state education reform, school administration and school-site management, were covered in previous Yearbooks (Boyd and Kerchner 1987, Hannaway and Crowson 1988). Other topics, including the politics of curriculum and testing, will be examined in the 1990 Yearbook. This Yearbook focuses on the roles to be played by education professionals, local citizen groups, government agencies and business leaders in shaping education policy, responses to racial and ethnic segregation, school restructuring, technology utilization, and the development of education politics and policy in Australia.

As we approach the twenty-first century, the politics of education in the United States will continue to be shaped by the neo-conservative legacy of the Reagan

administration. In chapter 2 of this Yearbook, David Clark and Terry Astuto predict no change in direction for federal education policy. Education will remain a low priority in Washington, characterized by few new initiatives and declining fiscal support. Despite his claim to be an education president, President Bush's education policies will almost certainly be constrained by economic, ideological and attitudinal factors beyond his control. The large federal deficit and President Bush's pledge of no new taxes preclude the adoption of any new, expensive education programs. The prevailing political and educational ideologies are compatible with a federal emphasis on state and local initiatives rather than federal interventions, and a focus on excellence, ability and productivity rather than on equity, access and student needs. Public opinion polls show strong support for these priorities. Clark and Astuto conclude, however, that the unmet educational needs of a growing number of poor children require the federal government to reassert its presence in education. A failure to respond, they insist, would 'be more costly in services, loss of productivity and human tragedy than the cost of a response'.

The retreat of the federal government from its role as a champion of equal educational opportunity comes at a time when continued housing segregation is intensifying the racial and economic isolation of children attending school in the nation's largest cities. In 1986, twelve of the fifteen largest school districts in the United States were more than 50% non-white (Orfield 1989). In chapter 3, Gary Orfield and Lawrence Peskin argue that if attempts are not made to integrate urban schools, poor and minority children will be condemned to attend schools that are both separate and unequal. These authors examine the educational impact of the 'Atlanta Compromise', a voluntary agreement among Black and White leaders to retain segregated schools in exchange for Black administrative control of the Atlanta school district. Policy makers took this action to avoid the 'White flight' they believed would follow any program of forced bussing. Atlanta's Black leaders were confident that they could achieve equality of educational opportunity within a segregated school system. The years have proved them wrong, however. The White community did not support the plan, and both White *and* Black middle class families fled the school system. Atlanta's schools became the most segregated schools in the South and now serve the poorest children in the metropolitan region. Although dropout rates have declined and elementary test scores have improved in the city schools, a tremendous gap remains between Black and White and city and suburban high schools. 'Class and race remain the decisive determinants of school conditions for the region'. A racially and socially segregated school system will perpetuate, and perhaps even intensify, unequal educational opportunity in metropolitan Atlanta and in other urban areas of the country.

Short of extensive inter-district desegregation efforts, what steps can be taken to improve education in disadvantaged schools? The education reform movement was supposed to improve the quality of educational instruction and, in turn, student achievement by raising curriculum standards, tightening teacher certification requirements and lengthening the school day and the school year. Critics of these state-directed reform efforts argued that these policies were doomed to failure because they did not, and could not, change the fundamental relationship between teaching and learning. In what has been dubbed the 'second wave' of education reform, calls have come for fundamental changes in school structure and organization.

Chapters 4 and 5 of the Yearbook explore political, institutional and cultural forces that shape school restructuring efforts. In chapter 4, Thomas Timar examines the impact of the macro-culture on attempts by three school districts to implement the radical restructuring advocated by Theodore Sizer and his Coalition of Essential Schools. Unlike other restructuring efforts, Sizer and his schools seek to alter the fundamental interaction

between teacher and student. Timar found that success requires not only a basic redefinition of the roles and responsibilities of personnel in the schools, but changes in district and state policy as well. For example, restucturing efforts in two of the districts Timar studied were hampered by political conflict over who would control restructuring – the schools and their teachers, or district adminstrators and the union. Teacher certification requirements, teacher evaluation procedures and standards, the structure and sequence of curriculum, student assessment measures, scheduling requirements and rigid staffing formulas also created barriers to restructuring efforts. The third district, however, altered its bureaucracy to accommodate decentralized decision-making. Both the district and union helped schools obtain waivers from restrictive regulations or the collective bargaining contract. Timar concludes that state and local policy cultures will prevent an integrated response to restructuring in most schools. A school 'cannot create coherence in an environment where there is none'.

Mary Haywood Metz discusses a more fundamental constraint to restructuring in chapter 5 – schools' adherence to a system of beliefs and expectations she calls the 'myth of the Real School'. In a study of eight high schools in a range of socioeconomic communities, she found that the schools' formal structures and technical procedures were strikingly similar in spite of vast differences in student bodies and economic resources. All followed a common script for the American High School, with similar school schedules, classroom configurations, textbooks and curriculum. This script did not work in several of the schools Metz studied. Students with weak academic skills and little hope of a successful economic future were alienated from school. They failed to learn well and most teachers were frustrated. Yet, no one was willing to revise the script. Adherence to the script gave teachers and students assurance that they were Real Teachers and Real Students who were teaching and learning in a Real School. Metz concludes that the myth of the Real School is extremely difficult to dislodge even when it proves ineffective because it serves a broader societal purpose. The symbols and rituals of Real Schools reinforce apparent equity in American education. 'Offering the same education to all appears to be the essence of fairness', regardless of the differential outcomes of the system.

In chapter 6, Philip Piele examines another panacea for improving education – the utilization of technology in the classroom. He argues that technological innovation will not begin to change schools until it offers an educationally-viable, cost-effective alternative to the classroom teacher. Microcomputers will not transform education because the hardware and software used in most public schools are too 'technologically primitive and educationally limited' to change the traditional role of teachers. Rather than integrating computers into their teaching methods, teachers can ignore the machines altogether, sending their students off to the school's computer lab to be instructed by a computer teacher. Interactive distance learning systems, however, have the potential to transform schools. Several states have introduced this technology to provide students, usually in rural school districts, greater access to limited, high cost courses, such as Advanced Placement, foreign language and remedial education. As the use of distance learning expands, proponents face a number of political and legal issues. Who will control curriculum: the state department of education or the service provider? Who will certify the instructor to teach: the state generating the programming or the state receiving the services? And most important, will distance learning replace the classroom teacher? Can this technology provide what microcomputers have not: real educational alternatives to the traditional classroom structure?

Chapters 7 and 8 explore the role of business in education reform. Kent McGuire examines the overall character of business-education interaction in chapter 7. He identifies

three roles played by businesses in their attempts to alter school performance – philanthropist, change agent and reformer. The philanthropic approach focuses on generating financial support for the schools. Businesses using the change agent mechanism seek to foster organizational or programmatic changes by targeting financial and/or technical assistance on specific activities. Business efforts to reform education policy range from issuing reports about the condition of education and its relationship to the economy to constructing, promoting and monitoring state education reform agendas. McGuire discusses issues facing business participation in education in the 1990s and concludes that we must learn more about how business–education collaborations work and the factors contributing to their effectiveness and longevity before we can speculate on the future of business involvement in the twenty-first century.

Carol Ray and Roslyn Mickelson increase our understanding of the dynamics of business–education interaction at the local level in chapter 8. In a case study of a local business task force on education and the economy, they trace the process by which business leaders' definition of 'the education problem' is reshaped by non-business members of the committee. The problem is initially defined by business as the inability of the school system to teach students work-related habits, values and skills. By effectively defending the quality of the community's schools and building on business' concern with the changing demographics of the next generation of workers, educators expand and alter the essence of the argument. Rather than indicting the educational system, the task force ultimately co..es to blame the deficits of low-income and minority families. This recasting of the problem leads to a reconsideration of policy alternatives. Early childhood education replaces vocational education as the solution to the educational problem. The authors conclude that underlying the rhetoric of school reform in the United States is a broader theme, one linked to issues of race and poverty. This new grounding for education policy analysis may often define the parameters of the education reform debate in the next century.

In chapter 9, Ian Birch and Don Smart examine the forces of change in Australian education politics. The factors shaping Australian education policy in the twenty-first century have a familiar ring: increased politicization of the educational policy process; tensions among the values of excellence, equity and choice; and most critically, the ascendancy of neo-conservative economic rationalist thinking. In contrast with the United States, the push to make Australia more competitive in the global economy is strengthening rather than weakening the federal role in education. The federal education portfolio of the Hawke Labor government has been restructured to remove education from its isolation and link it more closely to the business, employment and training sectors. Education representation on national commissions was diminished to allow for increased participation by representatives of industry, unions and the public. Reform of curriculum, certification and assessment is also driven by the national economic agenda. Birch and Smart argue, however, that implementation of national education policies will rely on the continued presence of a strong national education minister and ultimately on acceptance by the highly centralized state education ministers and influential education interest groups.

The Yearbook ends with a historical review of the foundations of the politics of education and an appraisal of issues likely to control policy making in the years ahead. Chapter 10 opens with a reminder that both professional and scholarly awareness of the political dimensions of schooling were suppressed for half a century by a convergence of the Urban Reform and Progressive Education movements with the development of Scientific Management theories of organizational control. Under the combined influence

of these three broad social developments, schools appeared to be moral rather than political institutions. From this anti-political consensus, school politics are linked to desegregation, national security and teacher organization issues arising during the 1950s and 60s. The final chapter concludes by exploring seven critical issues that can be expected to shape school politics in the twenty-first century.

Notes

1. Levin and his associates, for example, calculated the cost effectiveness of four alternative ways of improving reading and mathematical skills: reducing class size, increasing the amount of time devoted to skill instruction, peer tutoring and computer-assisted instruction. They found that *for the strategies studied* peer tutoring was more cost-effective than computer-assisted instruction and computer-assisted instruction was slightly more cost-effective than reducing class size (Levin *et al.* 1984).

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POLITICS OF EDUCATION ASSOCIATION YEARBOOK 1989, 11-25

The disjunction of federal educational policy and national educational needs in the 1990s

David L. Clark and Terry A. Astuto
University of Virginia

Despite President Bush's claim to an education presidency, the best prediction for federal educational policy, programs, and funds over the next decade is low priority, few initiatives, and declining fiscal support. There are, we will argue, a set of generic factors, that the President chooses to define as endemic, that will prevent the new administration from being more than a minor perturbation in determining the likely future of federal educational policy in this century. These controlling contextual factors are economic, ideological in both a political and educational sense, and attitudinal.

Factors controlling federal educational policy

The economic context

The most obvious and most powerful constraint on federal educational initiatives are three consentaneous economic decisions, that:

- the budget has to be balanced;
- the deficit has to be reduced;
- there will be no new taxes.

If those assertions continue to be held as axiomatic, no federal program can reasonably plan on attracting significant appropriation increases in the foreseeable future.

Education, as a field for investment, faces special difficulties. It has fared less well than other social programs in the eight years of the Reagan administration. Despite the efforts of Congress to fend off the incursions of the White House, outlays for the budget of the Department of Education since 1981 have:

- dropped from 0·6% to 0·4% of the GNP;
- decreased from 2·5% to 1·8% of the federal budget;
- reduced the federal share of expenditures for elementary and secondary education from 8·7% to 6·2%.

During the Reagan years, Congress appropriated $135·6 billion for education. If funding for the Department of Education had been frozen at 1980 levels, with no increase except for inflation, cumulative investments in education through the budget of ED would have amounted to $150·4 billion (Verstegen and Clark 1988).

However, expenditures for elementary and secondary education as a whole increased markedly during these years. Not only were the reductions in federal budgets passed on to

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the states, but governors and state legislatures appropriated funds in support of educational reform – a trend that began in the mid-1970s and was spurred by the national reform rhetoric of the mid-1980s. Many states are now confronting difficulties in funding the relatively less expensive reforms that were characteristic of the first round of state interventions. They will be more hard-pressed to pick up the bill for second level reforms that call for better preparation and professional development of teachers and administrators.

Thus, the bleak future for increased federal funding in education is exacerbated by:

- a pent up demand for funds caused by reductions in federal expenditures in education since 1980;
- a tightening revenue leeway at state and local levels caused by increased educational investments over the past eight years.

Obviously, education was not the only domestic program area that felt the press of cutbacks from 1980–1989. Legitimate unmet critical needs can be established for drug prevention and rehabilitation, health financing, child care, the homeless, welfare recipients, the environment, nursing homes, law enforcement, the country's transportation infrastructure. Education as a federal budgetary priority is in a difficult position to compete with these alternative domestic priorities. And all of these areas are in an impossible position to compete with the formula-driven entitlement programs that slip outside President Bush's 'flexible freeze'.

How powerful is the constraint of the economic context at the federal level in controlling new educational initiatives? Sufficiently powerful that most substantive presentations on needed federal budgetary increases conclude not with arguments about the merit of the presentation but with a re-assertion of the budgetary crisis – 'that's right, you have a good case, but there are simply no resources to meet good causes.'

The political-ideological context

There is a cyclicality to both conservatism and the role of the federal government in our system of federalism in the United States. The current cycle of dominant conservatism is ordinarily argued to be of some twenty years in duration. For so long as references to the 'L-word' paralyze responses from national candidates, one can reasonably assume that the national swing to conservative policies will continue.

Conservatism does not always imply a policy of reduced spending and devolution of authority at the federal level. The congressional coalition that built and sustained the federal program of categorical aid to education from 1955 to 1980 was composed of conservatives and liberals, under Democratic and Republican presidents, who believed that the federal government had a positive and useful role to play in support of educational improvement. However, by the mid-1970s a sentiment was growing at local and state levels, as well as in Washington, that federal programs in education and other social areas were less successful than they would be if the same programs were controlled by state and local officials. This feeling of uneasiness with efforts to mount a federal war on poverty, for example, was carried a step further by President Reagan who argued not only that you cannot solve domestic policy problems by throwing money at them, but that federal programs in education were part of the problem rather than the solution. In public opinion polls, most people believed that federal programs were inefficient, but doubted that they were worthless. There was a broad support for the notion that wasteful federal programs could be administered more efficiently and effectively closer to the point of effective action.

In 1989, the cycles of ideological conservatism and devolution of federal authority have become synchronized. It is very difficult, therefore, for any advocates to argue that the federal role should be expanded in any domestic arena. Education is especially hard-pressed to make a case since its historic position in the definition of federalism in the US has been marginal at the federal level. This political context reinforces already tight federal economic constraints, making unlikely the initiation of programs of intervention at levels higher than the state and making likely the continuance of the investment reduction and program abandonment agenda of the Reagan administration.

The educational-ideological context

A political ideology characterized by conservatism and devolution and the consensus that has emerged regarding economic policy establish the groundwork for a new federalism in educational policy. This new federalism is bolstered by a compatible shift in educational ideology. The substantive and procedural emphases of federal educational policy changed dramatically during the two terms of the Reagan Administration. Quite simply, Reagan redefined the content of educational policy at the federal level. The nature and extent of the redefinition are reflected in both the language of federal educational policy and the substantive and procedural policy preferences fostered by the Administration.

The language of federal educational policy: President Reagan held strong beliefs about education. Education was failing; federal involvement made a bad situation worse; state and local educational officials would fix what was wrong if they were not burdened by the federal presence; the United States was losing its position of preeminence in the global market due, in part, to the failure of the educational system. These beliefs were reflected in the language that dominated educational policy discussions. The new lexicon of terms depicted in table 1 marked the end of an era of discussion and debate built on quite different belief systems.

The new language of federal educational policy reflected President Reagan's views about the appropriate focus of educational policy, i.e., excellence, ability, and productivity. The pre-1980 priority on equity was replaced and the attention of the public and policy-makers was redirected toward excellence, standards of performance, and individual competition. Former Secretary Bennett argued that a revival of interest in excellence would benefit all children including those least well served by the educational system – the poor and minorities. Yet, asserting a theoretical compatibility of excellence and equity does not

Table 1. Terms that characterize the federal educational policy stance before and after 1980.*

Pre-1980 terms	*Post-1980 replacement terms*
1. Equity	Excellence; standards of performance
2. Needs and access	Ability; selectivity; minimum standards
3. Social and welfare concerns	Economic and productivity concerns
4. Common school	Parental choice; institutional competition
5. Regulations, enforcement	Deregulation
6. Federal interventions	State and local initiatives
7. Diffusion of innovations	Exhortation; information sharing

*From Clark and Astuto (1986: 5).

eliminate the obvious conflict. Such an argument misses the point. The new emphasis focuses attention on the conditions of children already experiencing success and away from the conditions of children who continue to be underserved.

Similarly, the emphasis on ability, selectivity and minimum standards competes with an emphasis on needs and access. While the two sets of choices are not exclusive, they are conflictive. Different types of policies are needed if the interest is in maintaining standards rather than opening opportunities for individuals who are not benefiting from current educational experiences.

The new language of federal educational policy stresses the link between educational attainment and economic productivity. Again, proponents couch the argument in terms of the social and welfare benefits that would accompany economic well-being. But the target of the policy thrust is economic competitiveness, not social equity.

In the 1984 State of the Union Address, Reagan asserted, 'Just as more incentives are needed within our schools, greater competition is needed among our schools. Without standards and competition there can be no champions, no records broken, no excellence – in education or any other walk of life.' Competitiveness is such a distinctly American value that alternatives seem unthinkable. Yet, support for institutional competition effectively drives out strategies to support and strengthen another American institution – the common school.

Policies of the pre-1980 period were responsive to the judicial findings and the convincing research evidence showing local school districts willingly excluded large numbers of individuals from the benefits of meaningful education. The new federal educational policy language reflects a competing belief system: state and local education agencies are both able and willing to identify their own problems and solve them. Federal regulations are the impediment, creating a strangle-hold on the local quest for excellence, rather than assuring local attention to equity.

Prior to the 1980s, the federal government operated a sophisticated support system for school improvement. Federal programs focused on the dissemination of innovations and the provision of technical assistance to local schools and school districts. At this point, most of the federal infrastructure supporting school improvement has been dismantled. Almost unbelievable efforts by interested educationists, lobbyists, and a few congressional sympathizers have managed to save the National Diffusion Network and the Regional Educational Laboratories (though resources have been slashed). The Reagan Administration's system of school improvement was built on rhetoric (the bully pulpit), dissemination of information about 'what works', and publication of information about how the states stack up in terms of a set of minimum performance standards (the Wall Chart).

This new language of federal educational policy reflects a new educational ideology. The new educational ideology translates into a specific set of policy preferences consistent with a belief system characterized by a focus on excellence, selectivity, productivity, competition, and devolution.

The Reagan federal educational policy agenda: The Reagan administration pursued an easily identifiable set of policy preferences with constancy and persistence. These preferences dominated educational policy discussions in Washington as early as 1982 and subsequently spread across the country:

1. *Institutional competition:* breaking the monopoly of the public school and publicizing varying levels of achievement among schools, school systems, and states to stimulate excellent performance;

2. *Individual competition:* recognizing excellence to stimulate excellence;
3. *Performance standards:* increasing minimum standards for teachers and students to increase achievement;
4. *Focus on content:* emphasis on basics to ensure performance in critical instructional areas;
5. *Parental choice:* parental control over what, where, and how their children learn;
6. *Character:* strengthening traditional values in schools.

The Department of Education successfully pushed *institutional competition* through its cross-state comparisons of educational achievement, and has stimulated programs of school and state comparisons among legislatures and through the Council of Chief State School Officers. The school recognition programs of ED were met with enthusiasm from local school administrators and policy makers.

The Department initiated programs to recognize and reward academic achievement of students to stimulate *individual competition* in schools. However, the greatest success in promoting individual competition was the revival of interest in various forms of merit pay for teachers – the most popular being career ladder incentive programs. Nearly half the states adopted mandatory legislation on career ladders.

The administration had no difficulty in pushing *performance standards*. Education in the United States has never seen a proliferation of minimum standards to match those adopted by state legislatures, local schools, and colleges and universities over the past eight years.

The *focus on content* supported instructional emphasis in the 'new basics' – reading, writing, arithmetic, science, and computer use. This policy preference gained ground chiefly through state and local requirements for the completion of more coursework in basic subjects and the reduction of elective options for students.

Various forms of *parental choice* of schools were proposed by the Reagan administration at the federal level. More ground was gained at the state and local levels evidenced by a variety of options in public education undertaken as alternative schools, magnet schools, and open enrollment plans.

Character education was emphasized by Former Secretary Bennett in awards from the Secretary's Discretionary Fund beginning in 1986. Interest in this theme was picked up by the states and local school districts in the form of school discipline standards, AIDS and substance abuse education programs, and family life education.

The Reagan education policy agenda has dominated the policy process at the federal and state levels. The pre-1980 policy agenda was turned inside out to produce a concentration on excellence, selectivity and minimum standards, economic and productivity concerns, competition and choice, and exhortation. The *policy preferences* highlighted gains in individual competition, institutional competition, performance standards, an emphasis on the basics, and parental choice. Most significantly the *policy process* was altered basically by transferring responsibility for educational policy formulation from Washington to the states and increasing the burden of funding education at the state level.

The Bush factor

The thrust of the argument so far demonstrates that the degree of flexibility available to any presidential incumbent to influence federal educational policy over the next ten years is minimal. In the case of President Bush this should create little dissonance. He asserted the elements of the federal economic context repeatedly in his campaign. He is ideologically comfortable with a conservative stance and a policy of devolution in education.

The first Bush budget in education called for new initiatives in education that would cost some $450 million – the bulk of which Congress would have to find in existing programs. The majority of the funds were earmarked for awards to excellent schools, alternative systems of certification for educational personnel, educational tax credits for low income families, the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act, the Youth Entering Service program, and magnet schools (with a special admonition that funds are not to be used to foster desegregation). Almost without exception, the new programs emphasize institutional and individual competition to de-emphasize the monopoly of the public schools, e.g., magnet schools, excellent schools, tax credits, alternative certification routes. The President is not only comfortable with the political stance of conservatism and devolution, but with the educational stance of the Reagan administration structurally, substantively, and affectively.

This is not to argue that the President should adopt an educational initiative that is inconsistent with his fiscal, political, educational philosophy. We do argue that he will not and, consequently, his initiatives will support the status quo, already a likely future based on the contextual factors noted earlier.

There may be an argument, to which we will return later, that the President's expressed concerns and his actions are inconsistent. His first budget seems to miss a central objective of his educational policy intent, to wit, 'we must help those schools that need help most'. His proposed interventions seem not nearly proportionate to the problem of the education of the poor in our society. Instead, the interventions are consistent with and further strengthen the educational ideological context that developed in and dominated the Reagan Administration.

The context of public opinion

The economic and ideological contextual factors support and are supported by the beliefs and opinions of the general public. Public opinion, then, is another contextual factor related to the durability or likely staying power of the *status quo*. Since policy by its nature is iterative and interactive an assenting or dissenting public opinion needs to be considered:

- Does the public agree with the current federal educational policy preferences?
- Does the public support the redefined federal role?
- Or, does public opinion support the need for a change?

Public opinion polls reveal overwhelmingly positive reactions to the main features of the federal educational policy agenda, i.e., raising standards, increasing competition, emphasizing the basics, promoting parental choice, and fostering character education.

Regardless of how the question is worded, public opinion polls endorse the value of standards manipulation. By a 7–1 margin (9–1 among non-public school parents), the public believes that requiring higher academic achievement will improve the quality of public schools. Note the responses to specific questions:

- Do elementary and secondary school students in this community work too hard? elem. 5%; sec. 3%; or do they not work hard enough? elem. 49%; sec. 54% (Gallup 1975).
- Should all high school students be required to pass a standard nationwide exam in order to get a high school diploma? yes 65%; no 31% (Gallup 1976).
- Should teachers be required to pass a state board examination to prove their knowledge in the subjects they teach? yes 85%; no 9% (Gallup 1979).

A substantial majority (5–3) believe raising standards will encourage rather than discourage the academic achievement of students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Freeman *et al.* 1985).

By equally convincing margins, the public believes that greater competition is needed among schools. Seventy percent of those surveyed believe that state-by-state and school-by-school comparisons of student achievement should be made public, and that the results of such comparisons would serve as an incentive for local schools to do better whether the local schools scored better or worse than comparable schools elsewhere (Gallup and Clark 1987).

Any question about emphasizing the basics in schools results in a positive response from 75% of the respondents. Seventy-five to fourteen percent believe that increasing required courses and reducing electives will increase school quality. By a 2–1 margin the public feels that the basics are not emphasized enough in local elementary schools. Overwhelming percentages would mandate core courses for high school students (Whitt *et al.*, 1986).

Policy preferences regarding parental choice are also supported by the public. Most parents want the freedom to exercise choice in the schools their children will attend (Gallup and Clark 1987). The public feels that parents and local boards of education should determine the curriculum (Gallup 1984). And the public supports strong parental involvement in local decision making (ABC/*Washington Post* 1981), establishing programs of study for their own children (Gallup 1980), and improving school discipline (Gallup 1985).

Finally, the public supports efforts to foster character education:

- Do you favor or oppose an amendment to the Constitution that would permit prayers to be said in the public schools? favor 76%; oppose 18% (CBS/*New York Times* 1981)
- What objectives do not receive enough attention in high school? developing student's moral and ethical character 62% (Gallup 1981)
- Would you favor or oppose instruction in the schools that would deal with values and ethical behavior? favor 79%; oppose 15% (Gallup 1975).

Clearly, the public is supportive of the federal education policy agenda. And, that agenda is more likely to survive because it reflects public preference.

Does the public support the redefined federal role in education? In general, yes:

- Do you think the federal government creates more problems than it solves? creates more 63%; solves more 19% (CBS/*New York Times* 1981)
- Which level of government does the best job of dealing with the problems it faces? federal 21%; state 26%; local 32% (CBS/*New York Times* 1981)
- Do you approve or disapprove the states taking over some social programs now run by the federal goverment? approve 75%; disapprove 21% (ABC/*Washington Post* 1982)
- Would the state be more efficient? more 51%; less 28% (ABC/*Washington Post* 1982).

But the public is not enthusiastic about removing the federal government from the business of education. Though split on the issue of increasing or decreasing federal influence, majority opinion (51%) supports maintaining or increasing the current level of federal influence. The closer one moves to the local district, the higher the percentage of respondents that choose equal or increased influence (state 70%, local 81%). Devolution as a policy preference is popular with the general public.

Would the public favor a change in federal educational policy? Evidence from the public opinion polls demonstrates widespread support for the substantive and procedural emphases

of the federal educational policy agenda. Probably more importantly, the public does not sense a crisis in education. The level of dissatisfaction with schools is not very high. Two-thirds of those who should know schools best (parents rating the schools in their own community) would rank them A or B; only 9% ranked them below average. Parents like their children's teachers – in the elementary school an incredible 71% rated them A or B; even at the high school level they only rated 10% below average. They like their school administrators; two-thirds (63%) of elementary school parents rated principals A or B.

However, there are interesting pockets of dissatisfaction in the overall picture of satisfaction. When non-parents and parents of private school students are asked to rate local public schools, less than half rated them A or B (43%) and 13% rated them below average. The respondents least satisfied with the schools are non-white, younger, poorer, living in central cities. The differences are quite startling; for example, residents in small towns rate their schools A or B almost twice as frequently as center city residents (53% to 28%).

The context of public opinion is strongly supportive of the status quo. There is no sense of crisis. Many feel needed reforms are well under way. For example, a recent *Washington Post* editorial (9 May 1989: A22) referred to 'the vigorous attempts that are in fact proceeding in education reform today'. Based on public opinion polls, the public would echo the *Post*'s assertion.

The economic context, the broad ideological context, the narrower educational ideological context, the populist support for the federal educational policy agenda, and the belief that education is improving constitute a powerful support system for the status quo. Based on these contextual conditions, federal educational policy throughout the 1990s will look much as it does right now.

Contextual factors demanding a federal educational policy response

Are there any circumstances under which a policy response from the federal level can be imagined as necessary in the midst of the inhibiting factors just described? The *sine qua non* of such a necessity would have to be a condition of criticalness. Influential policy makers would have to be convinced, firstly, that the nation is at risk unless remedial action is taken. Secondly, there would need to be evidence that a modified federal role is imperative to cope with the critical condition. At a complementary level the consequences of the crisis need to be demonstrable in economic and human terms.

The critical issue of the 1990s: poor children, inadequate education

Unfortunately in the immediate past, The National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) (1983) appropriated the designation 'risk' to stimulate an educational reform effort directed toward weaknesses in the country's educational system. 'Risk' is too important a designation to use lightly – it conjures danger, peril, menace. The use of the term by NCEE was a hyperbolic, though politically effective, depiction of the inadequacies of the US educational system in response primarily to students who had strong family support, who were average or above average in achievement, who were housed and fed adequately, whose medical needs were treated, who could look forward to a decent life, a reasonable job, a chance in our society. 'Risk' and the plethora of reform reports and academic debates that followed sparked useful attention to academic deficiencies in schools. Decline in SAT scores, unfavorable comparative academic achievement in science and mathematics across national

boundaries, and the surprisingly low percentage of high school students who know the geographic location of Seattle, Costa Rica, or Beverly Hills are occasions for honest concern.

But the space between concern and risk is broad. NCEE, along with Professors Bloom, Hirsch, and Ravitch, are misdirecting the attention of the American people from the risk factor in American education. The risk lies with poor children who may have meager home support structures, are lagging far behind in school achievement, may be homeless, are often hungry, ill, and can see little chance for a decent job or a life in the sunlight of this society. Their risk is finally our risk since education is the only route available to them or to us if we hope to escape the establishment of a permanent underclass.

Let's talk about risk. If you are a young, Black parent-to-be in our nation's Capital, you can anticipate that your child will have one chance in forty of dying before or within one year after its scheduled birth date (US Conference of Mayors 1988: 53). That is two and one-half times the national average. If the child survives, chances are one in three that s/he will live its childhood in poverty (ibid: 23). The chances are 50/50 that the child will not finish high school (State Education Performance 1989) and nearly 50/50 that, if that is the case, the youngster will be unemployed (Council of the Great City Schools: 22). All of these predictions lead to the reasonable expectation that by age twenty your child will be dead, on welfare, and/or connected to the criminal or retreatist sub-culture of the city. That is RISK!

The condition of urban poverty for children is out of control. Thirty percent of children in large cities are living in poverty; a figure that has increased by 16% from 1979 to 1986 (US Conference of Mayors 1988: 3). Sixty percent of the youngsters in Camden, New Jersey live in poverty households (ibid: 23). The condition is so pervasive we are no longer stunned by such statistics. And they are not concentrated in one area. Over 40% of the children in Hartford and New Haven, Connecticut (the state with the highest per capita income in the country) and more than a third of the youngsters in El Paso, Norfolk, Buffalo, Chicago, San Antonio, Philadelphia, Boston and New York are in the same circumstance. Poor children are not concentrated in a single geographic area, but they are concentrated with minority populations. Seventy-five percent of the student population in the great city schools are minorities; one-third of all the Blacks in the country are attending center city schools (Council of the Great City Schools: 2, 4).

Minority youth are dropping out of school at startling rates. In the large city schools 31% of Hispanic youth are dropouts (ibid: 9). And this is the fastest growing minority group in the country; by the year 2010 they will out-number all other minority groups.

The impact of dropouts is easier to dramatize if you think of a single city. Last year 13,000 students dropped out of the Chicago Public Schools (ibid: 8). In that single city we can expect 143,000 dropouts by the year 2000 if the situation remains stable. And, recall, that for these dropouts the unemployment rate is staggering.

So is the condition of adult Black Americans and Hispanics. Forty-seven percent of Black and 56% of Hispanic adults are classified as functionally illiterate or marginal readers (ibid: 33). Their job opportunities are obviously limited and their economic condition is worsening sharply; from 1973 to 1986, the average annual earning for Black males fell by 50% (Commission on Minority Participation in American Life 1988: 10) and the real income of young, Black families fell from $12,000 to $6,400 (William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship 1988: 19). Another generation of young Americans is being trapped in an inexorable cycle of failure.

The federal role in the crisis

Simply because a crisis is national does not mean that the response is appropriately federal or that the federal response would necessarily involve appropriations or programs. The overall demography of the country in 1990, however, and the enormity of the problem suggest that the solution demands federal involvement for three reasons:

- poor children are intensely concentrated in core areas of the great cities;
- state expenditures and fiscal capacity vary widely;
- the growth of metropolitan regions around the great cities extending into neighboring states converts city and state problems into inter-state problems.

Concentration: The process of devolution may need to be reconsidered when the magnitude of the problem exceeds the available resources at a given level to deal with the problem. Cities that have become overwhelmed by the concentration of poverty in their boundaries turn to states for assistance. But where does a state turn when 40% of its population is in a single urban center, i.e., New York City; or when over a million inhabitants are in a single municipal setting, e.g., Los Angeles, Detroit, Philadelphia, Houston; or when the population cluster exceeds 10% even though the state is normally not considered 'urban', e.g., Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon.

The problem, of course, is not exclusively urban. Several states have intense statewide concentrations of children from minority and/or poverty families combined with a limited tax base, e.g., Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, South Carolina, West Virginia. All of these states rank between forty-fourth and fifty-first in per capita income.

The national problem of children in poverty exists in all states but is, concurrently, distributed unevenly by state and local jurisdiction. As noted, the forty-four Great City Schools enroll a third of all Black public school children and 27% of all Hispanic public school children. Fifty-six percent of all Black youth aged 16–24 live in the central areas of these cities (Council of the Great City Schools: 2). One-half of the country's population is in nine states; four of which are affected dramatically by new immigrants (Education Commission of the States 1988: 4). If the schools in these cities and states fail, the nation's commitment to the education of minorities and poor children fails.

Variation: These extraordinary pockets of poverty occur within states and localities already exhibiting startling variations in expenditures for elementary and secondary education. The top five states in the country spent roughly $6,000 per year per pupil in 1987. The bottom six spent less than $2,600 (State Education Performance Chart). Los Angeles spent $3,440 per pupil (Council of the Great City Schools: 8) – $500 less than the national average for all schools. Equalized property valuation per pupil in the State of New Jersey was nearly $214,000; in the six largest urban areas, $60,760 (Council of the Great City Schools: 4). As noted in the preceding paragraph, five of these states with the highest state concentration of poor children are among those with the lowest per capita income. The money is not where the problem is. States and cities with high rates of child poverty cannot remedy this discrepancy unilaterally.

Regionalization: Even this does not take into account the regionalization of problems in the United States. Philadelphia is the largest city in Delaware; 40% of the population of metropolitan St Louis lives in Illinois. The same condition is true in Arkansas and Memphis, in Omaha and Iowa (Education Commission of the States: 4). When states and city-states

share problems of a critical nature on a regional basis, traditional concepts of federalism need to be reconsidered.

A modified federal role seems to be justified by the criticalness of the problem, the urgency of its solution, and the inability of standard political structures to respond.

The consequences of failing to respond

Economic: Is it possible, then, to argue that even in a period of fiscal constraint inactivity in this policy area would be inefficient and irresponsible? The fiscal implications of inactivity are rushing toward us. The Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life, for example, noted that by the year 2000 16% (21·8 million persons) of the US labor force will be non-white, and one-third of all school age children will be minorities. (Commission on Minority Participation: 3). Between 1987 and the year 2025 the number of individuals drawing social security benefits will increase from 30 per 100 workers to 47 per 100 workers (ibid: 11). The strength of the income support and health care systems of the country will become increasingly dependent on the earning power of minorities throughout the first quarter of the next century.

However one examines the fiscal issue, the answer is always the same, to wit:

- The Cost to the City of Chicago to provide for 13,000 dropouts over their lifetimes is estimated to be $2·5 billion (ibid); for the 143,000 estimated between now and the year 2000, $27·5 billion.
- The cost to the City of Chicago to provide for 13,000 dropouts over this lifetime is estimated to be $2·5 billion (ibid); for the 143,000 estimated between now and the year 2000, $27·5 billion.
- Health care costs for pregnant teenagers, young drug users, AIDS victims, crime victims are overwhelming.
- The talent pool needed to maintain domestic productivity and meet international competition will have to draw increasingly from that segment of our population that is least well served by current school programs.

Human: Not everyone needs to buttress the arguments for activity in this period of crisis on economic grounds. For some, the human tragedy cloaked in the demographic data is sufficient. A life is an awful thing to waste. For each person affected, the opportunity to use his/her life rather than to waste it comes up just once; the right to the pursuit of happiness is a unique, solitary right. And for a high percentage of the individuals being described in this chapter the odds against them are overwhelming. They are crime victims – the crime is birth into poverty, limited opportunity, despair. Failure to respond extends the human tragedy year-by-year across generations.

Human tragedy is never contained within a society. The end result of decay in a segment of society is decay throughout the society. Crime, drugs, AIDS, violence, despair spread in a negative amplifying cycle from the poor, the homeless, the helpless, and the neglected to those whose participation in the good of the society seemed inviolable. The consequences of failing to respond to this crisis seem sufficiently arguable to serve as a political tool for action.

Some may contend that funds are not available to invest in the education of the poor, There are, however, better reasons to argue that:

- the condition of urban poverty for children is out of control;

- these children are not being provided with a reasonable opportunity to obtain the education needed to escape from poverty;
- this national problem is too intense and its solution too costly to be addressed effectively without major participation by all governmental levels – including a significant federal presence;
- the consequences of failing to respond will be more costly in services, lost productivity, and human tragedy than the cost of a response;
- the long range consequence (20–25 years) will be a bifurcation of American society beyond repair; this society cannot exist half affluent and half deprived.

The normative responsibility of policy analysts

For the past decade, many observers, including the authors of this chapter, have concentrated on documenting changes in federal educational policy initiated under the Reagan administration. Scholarly interest has dictated an even-handed and dispassionate analysis aimed at providing information on what the administration was attempting to do, the nature of the tactical and strategic processes used, whether they were succeeding or failing, and whether the changes were having demonstrable effects and lasting impact.

In this context, relatively little attention has been given to the larger question of whether continuation of the Reagan policy of diminution and devolution is having disadvantageous effects on the daily life and educational opportunity of poor children in the United States. As the impact of Reagan policies has been more fully documented, we have come to recognize the importance of shifting from an analysis of changes in federal education policy to evaluation of these policies. The core question for the 1990s and beyond, is whether criticisms like that expressed by Senator Hollings in a recent *Washington Post* article accurately characterize the Reagan policies. Hollings asserted that:

> Uncle Sam is running on empty . . . liberal pundits crow that the Reagan revolution has failed, that the federal fortress stands stronger than ever. They are dead wrong . . . under George Bush as under Ronald Reagan, the hollowing out of the federal government continues apace. Profound social problems – the pathologies of the underclass, a failing educational system, declining competitiveness – are not addressed in any meaningful way. We will learn – too late I fear – that there is no substitute for activist, competent government. (*Washington Post* 30 April 1989: C-1, 2)

Senator Hollings went on to argue that continuation of the present federal course will leave America 'naked to its worst domestic enemies: poverty, ignorance, racism, lawlessness' (ibid: C-2). Such analyses rest on values — deeply held political ideologies – not on social science scrutiny of data.

The time has come for policy-makers and analysts to assess whether scrutiny of data on the effects of the Reagan policy changes in education support some or all of the Hollings argument. Massive withdrawal of federal support for programs aimed at ameliorating the effects of poverty on the educational opportunities of poor children represents a fundamental reversal of the quarter-century commitment to this American ideal.

Becoming involved in assessing the normative consequences of continuing the current policies would require insisting that President Bush has no hope of getting money where the problem is in education with his FY '90 budget proposal. The budget emphases are simply misdirected from this goal. It would also mean labeling as trivial Secretary Cavazos' claim – supported by his wall chart data – that school reform has 'stagnated'. Basing arguments on data reflecting largely artifactual changes in SAT scores, while ignoring the abandonment of the poor in federal budget priorities and programs, focuses public debate on a trivial issue while obscuring core problems of leadership and national commitment. States and localities

cannot fix SAT scores when they are faced with massive social dislocations and are being cut off from federal resources and program leadership.

State and local educators can only hope to succeed if they join together with those working in other sectors on problems of health, crime, day care, jobs, and drugs to mount an offensive that will make a difference. Perhaps they should shamelessly advocate 'throwing money at this problem'. The conservative Reagan administration attacked domestic issues with a sweeping insistence that you 'can't solve problems by throwing money at them'. At the same time, however, national defense and international policy issues were tackled on the premise that dollar resources were the central problem. Money for defense spending and for Contra aid was sought with little or no attention given to problems of federal program waste and inefficiency. Money does solve problems! Few observers would argue that this country is not stronger militarily in 1989 than in 1980. There was waste along the way but there were also substantial gains in military preparedness.

The massive educational unpreparedness declared by the *Nation at Risk* report certainly applies to our ability to prepare the nation's poor for contributing to or participating in the benefits of American society. Would a national education build-up comparable to the Reagan administration's military build-up be put to effective use? Of course it would, and without years of experimentation and tests. We already know how to make key structural changes that could be initiated relatively quickly – changes that are conceptually uncomplicated and unsophisticated – that would reduce the educational disadvantages of poor children markedly. We could, for example:

- Open urban schools in depressed rural areas twelve months a year. Today's near universal extended vacation periods (*a*) cause significant losses in learning gained during the academic year; (*b*) reduce instructional and personal development time for these youngsters; (*c*) return these children and youth to an environment that places them at risk.
- Open these same schools from 6:00 a.m. to midnight as community centers for children and youth that provide places to learn, study, live, play – and a place to be fed three meals a day without evidence of need or desperation.
- Join with other agencies to provide health, social services, dental services, counseling, job placement under one roof.
- Offer day care services in public school buildings for the parents or parent of poor children. Current estimates are that day care slots in cities for low-income children serve an average of 37% of the children under six (US Conference of Mayors: 25).
- Provide pre-school programs for all children in center cities and depressed rural areas beginning at least at age two.

Would such efforts make a difference? Certainly! Are they the only or the most efficient changes to make? Perhaps not, but when massive build-ups are needed, broad-based actions with reasonable chances of success are to be preferred to small scale experimental strategies. That we are not already supporting actions like those listed underscores a lack of commitment to this tragic personal–social situation, not an uncertainty about how to deal with it. It is like failing to use available remedies for a dread disease because they are costly. We must stop treating trivial solutions as if they were serious approaches to solving the problem. They should be brushed aside as the distractions that they are.

Most of these changes could be effected by increasing expenditures from the current national average of approximately $4,000 per year to $12,000 per year. That would be a miniscule investment in the some 5·3 million children who live in poverty in America's

central cities; somewhere in the neighborhood of $42 billion. That would bring the federal investment in education to roughly $63 billion, triple today's $21 billion. The amount is modest when compared to the defense build-up of the 1980s and only seems absurd if one considers the problem less than vital.

The American people need to measure their society, as Hubert Humphrey argued a quarter of a century ago, by the same standard all societies need to be measured – the manner in which it deals with those who do not live in the sunlight of that society: the very young, the very old, the poor, the sick, the unemployed – those who cannot, at least temporarily, control their own destinies. To this end we need to work toward the introduction of solutions that are proportionate to the problems with which we are now faced in the educational

education should commit their energies and talents. The time is now to assume a normative responsibility for the quality of life of poor children.

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Metropolitan high schools: income, race and inequality

Gary Orfield and Lawrence Peskin
University of Chicago

Housing segregation is the basic structure of racial separation in metropolitan areas, and the schools are its most important expression in a public institution. School are also the most important instruments for socializing children and giving them the tools to function effectively in the metropolitan society and economy in which they are born and grow up. The schools in metropolitan Atlanta are among the nation's most segregated and are systematically unequal. They are one of the basic mechanisms by which unequal opportunity is perpetuated and, perhaps, even intensified, between generations. Understanding the broad patterns of racial differentiation in the public schools helps explain the widely divergent black and white patterns in college, job training, and employment.

To be sure, schools are not the fundamental *cause* of inequality, nor do most researchers believe that they can provide a total solution. Income distribution, housing segregation and job access, for example, are also basic sources of inequality. Education, however, does have the potential of transforming the lives of those students with the capacity and the opportunity to avail themselves of it, and receipt of a high school diploma and a college degree are achievements of extraordinary importance in the contemporary labor market.

In the Atlanta area, the evidence strongly suggests the public education system is organized to give the best opportunities to those whose families have the most resources and to keep low-income central city students concentrated in isolated and inferior schools.

High school is the last stage of universal public education in the United States and the key to almost all decent jobs in the American economy. High school is the pathway toward or away from college, and the place where young people are expected to go beyond the basic skills to the higher order skills that are the basis of reasoning, expression, scientific understanding, and civic leadership. High school encompasses that period of time when young people have to work out their transition from childhood and begin to formulate plans for their adult lives, while dealing with all the stresses of adolescence.

But for a great number of minority and low-income Americans, high school is an experience that encourages failure – beginning in a dismal setting and ending without a diploma or any other evidence of achievement. Many of those who do graduate are not really ready for either college or the job market. Many leave with yet another cross to bear: teenage pregnancy or serious drug addiction, prescriptions for a self-perpetuating cycle of poverty. Young men often feel the push of academic failure and the pull of friends with what seem like vast sums of money from the illegal economy that flourishes in the inner city and that leads to social alienation, prison, and a life of failure.

These problems are exacerbated in schools without middle-class academic expectations. Failure is encouraged in schools lacking the example of competitive students successfully positioning themselves for good jobs or colleges, without the effective community sanctions to discourage teen pregnancy and dropouts, where teachers do push or prod

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because they are not 'burned out' by a depressing environment and too many daily burdens. Middle class schools are much more connected to colleges and jobs.

The Supreme Court held, in 1954, that legally segregated schools were 'inherently unequal' and, in 1955, required their elimination 'with all deliberate speed'. After more than 35 years, as this chapter will show, unequal conditions continue to be serious and disproportionately concentrated in segregated, inner-city high schools such as Atlanta's. Metropolitan Atlanta schools are significantly *more* segregated today than they were in the 1970s, when black community leaders and white political leaders put their heads together in an attempt to avoid busing, the 'solution' then being imposed on many other urban school systems.

Atlanta's strategy was, in effect, the very model of the approach championed by conservatives who have tended to see 'forced busing' as an unnecessary evil leading to deteriorating schools and white flight. It also appealed to those advocates of black power who believed that black leaders would solve the educational problems of black children. In practice, the results prove how wrong both groups were. Not only has large-scale busing proven to be essential in the achievement of substantial racial and economic integration in metropolitan area schools elsewhere in the South, but integrated schools have been generally more successful than their segregated counterparts (Orfield and Monfort 1988). There are no signs that metropolitan Atlanta's separate schools are becoming equal, or that the race of the leadership is of great importance.

Atlanta's unique history

Desegregation busing was avoided in Atlanta through an explicit agreement to reorganize the schools. The 'Atlanta Compromise', as it came to be known, had as its purpose achievement of educational equity without panicking whites. This could be done without busing, its architects decided, by putting the white-run city school system under black control. At the time, some black schools were seriously run down, understaffed in comparison with the majority-white schools, and badly in need of books and blackboards – and Atlanta had not yet elected its first black mayor or black Chamber of Commerce president. The prospect of black leadership of the school system was a heady one indeed – a bold stroke redefining the issue and redirecting the struggle for equity.

Under the controversial agreement (which the NAACP's national leadership opposed, and which ultimately cost local NAACP president Lonnie King his job), the school board promised to hire a black superintendent and other black administrators in exchange for a plan that left many schools segregated. 'In hindsight, I think it was a terrible mistake', said Julian Bond in 1987, who took over the local NAACP leadership after Lonnie King's ouster.

The 'mistake' had its origins in Atlanta's response to the Supreme Court's 1954 decision, *Brown v. Board of Education* (347 US 483). Following the Court's reasoning, the NAACP set out to integrate the schools, using a 1958 lawsuit charging that the Atlanta Board had failed to comply with *Brown*. A federal judge issued a desegregation order but, in rhetoric typical of the times, Senator Richard Russell (D-Ga.) urged the board to fight 'this effort of the itinerant lawyers of the colored people's association'. It took six years for the case to reach the US Supreme Court, which sent that case back to the district court, and yet another decade passed before serious action was taken. While much of the South was beginning significant integration, Atlanta continued to resist (Hansen 1987:1, 11).

Passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and key Supreme Court rulings in support of busing in 1968 and 1971 sped integration elsewhere. But a series of conservative-leaning federal judges in Atlanta delayed desegregation while black enrollments climbed and white suburbanization skyrocketed. By the early 1970s the fear of losing the remaining whites seemed a reasonable basis for leaving segregation virtually untouched in the predominately black city. Sweeping demographic changes, the city school district's lawyers argued, made it too late for desegregation.

Though Atlanta remained unaffected, the Supreme Court's 1971 *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg* (402 US 1) decision authorizing busing for urban school desegregation stimulated the development and implementation of hundreds of new desegregation plans across the Southern and border states. Eventually Atlanta blacks, tired of the foot-dragging, and white business leaders began worrying that bad press would scare away new industry. So a cadre of white business and civic leaders, including then-Governor Jimmy Carter and Federal Judge Griffin Bell (who later became President Carter's Attorney General) supported the compromise agreement with local black and white leaders.

Defenders of the agreement to accept segregation in return for black administrative control of the school district recast the equity issue. The belief that black students needed access to white schools with superior resources, competition, and better prepared teachers gave way to the hope that black administrators would understand the needs of black children and would find ways to make segregated, low-income, inner city schools equal to the middle class white schools. Atlanta Superintendent Alonzo Crim insisted that equality could be achieved within the system of segregation.

'I have always believed that if you could ever achieve equity in the administration of the school system, then it would improve the chances of black kids getting a better education', said Lyndon Wade, then chairman of a biracial group appointed by the US District Court to advise both sides in the lawsuit, and later president of the Atlanta Urban League (Hansen 1987).

By this time, busing within city limits seemed futile, there were not enough whites left to achieve a reasonable level of integration. Atlanta's black leaders also rejected the possibility of busing children across city and suburban lines (a tactic that has worked well elsewhere). Support from Atlanta black leaders was notably absent when an area-wide desegregation lawsuit was brought by ACLU lawyer Margie Pitts Hames. She attempted to trace the origins of Atlanta's residential housing patterns to deliberate acts and policy decisions by governmental officials, and to make them responsible for eliminating school segregation across county lines. Not surprisingly, the federal courts ruled against the ACLU lawsuit which was advanced without support of the Atlanta Public Schools. Successful metropolitan cases, including those in Wilmington, Louisville, Indianapolis and the settlements in St Louis, Little Rock, and Milwaukee, all involved cases brought with support from central city school boards.

Some black leaders thought that the basic need was money, not access to middle class schools. 'It was really the integration of the money to provide a quality education for all children that was black folks' goal,' according to Andrew Young, the civil rights leader who later became Atlanta's congressman and then its mayor. 'Racial balance was (just) a means for achieving the goal.'

'[Lonnie] King was the "real hero"', Lyndon Wade said, for having the courage to compromise and avoid the violence of integration that plagued other Southern cities. 'What went wrong', said Wade, 'was that the support of the plan was not forthcoming from the white community. The white kids continued to leave the system.' (Hansen 1987).

Black and white negotiators had accepted the premise that since 'white flight' was caused by busing neighborhood schools would hold white students. In fact, however, Atlanta's decline in enrollment was among the most rapid of all large school districts. Between 1967 and 1968, the total Atlanta enrollment dropped 41%. The school district was 38% white in 1968, but had only 15% whites by 1974, and was down to 7% white in 1986. Clearly, the compromise didn't hold whites, and it certainly reinforced continued high levels of segregation. The big cities that best held white enrollment were part of mandatory metropolitan-wide desegregation programs (Orfield and Monfort 1988: 11, 13, 16). What happened was not white flight from busing – there was no significant desegregation. There was, however, a rapid fall in white and black middle class students as the wealthier families of both races abandoned the city system which became progressively poorer and blacker.

During the 1986–87 school year, 98% of Atlanta's black students were in majority black schools and 91% were in schools that were 90–100% non-white. The typical black student in the city was in a school were only 4% of the students were white.

No city in the South was more intensely segregated; only New Orleans came close (Orfield and Montfort: 20, 24). On a metropolitan level, the Atlanta region was one of the few major southern metropolises to become more segregated for black students during the 1970s and whose segregation continued to intensify in the 1980s as the number of black suburbanites rapily climbed. Across the entire metropolitan area in the 1984–85 school year, the typical black student was in a school that was only one-sixth white (17.1%) (Orfield *et al.* 1987: 17–18).

The defense of the acceptance of segregation by black leaders combined several elements: the futility of pursuing integration after the vast expansion of the ghettos and the departure of most whites, the assertion that black leadership was solving the problems, and the need to avoid overt conflict with whites. Mayor Andrew Young, who had been one of Martin Luther King's closest associates in the great civil rights marches of the 1960s, said that it was 'tragic' that integration had not been achieved but that compromise had been basically wise:

> Instead of pushing for massive busing across county lines, we worked out a compromise agreement with the court that allowed a predominantly black administration to basically take control of the system.
>
> It was good and it was bad. What happened when that occurred was that too many whites pulled out of the school system and too many middle class blacks did. (*Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 4 October 1987).

The compromise, he argued, had helped in the political and economic success of the city. 'One of the reasons the city has succeeded is that it has been able to make racial compromises', he said (Orfield *et al.* 1987). Atlanta blossomed economically in the 1980s, but so did a number of the Southern metropolitan areas with massive city-suburban desegregation plans – including metropolitan Orlando, Charlotte, Tampa-St Petersburg, and Nashville.

Still, the irony is clear. Atlanta – birthplace of the civil rights movement, crucible of black leadership and economically booming metropolis of the future – failed to integrate its schools, and its black leaders agreed to accept segregation in return for power within a deteriorating and increasingly isolated system. Moreover, the hope that segregated schools could be made equal has gone a-glimmering. There were already signs in a 1979 report by a research center at Clark College in Atlanta that the bargain had failed. The study reported drastic enrollment declines, rapid racial transition, racial and class isolation, diminishing business interest in the schools, little community involvement and low test scores which were in low-income black schools (Hadden *et al.* 1979).

The school district attacked that study. Its leaders promised to rapidly move the students toward national norms. The data reported in this chapter, however, show that pattern of segregated and unequal schools was still strikingly apparent, on a metropolitan scale, in the mid-1980s. To secure black control at the top, the compromise had traded away the opportunities of low income blacks in the metro area to pursue access to a high school operating at or near national grade level norms.

The effects of the Atlanta Compromise are most apparent at the high school level. Atlanta's black and poor inner-city youths consistently perform and graduate at much lower levels than their more affluent, white surburban neighbors. Our study, the first systematic analysis of racial, income and performance data from all the high schools in the metropolitan Atlanta area, reveals that in every category, the performance of schools throughout the region can be closely predicted solely on the basis of the percentages of black and poor students, so divided are these schools by race, class, and academic achievement levels. Put differently, school funding, by itself, does not appear to eliminate the performance gap. This research shows that Atlanta is actually an area with relatively strong funding for central city schools, but even when more money is spent on low-income schools, deep inequalities remain.

Distribution of students by race and income in metro Atlanta

At the core of the five county Atlanta metropolitan area lies the city of Atlanta – a city whose public high school students, nine-tenths of whom are black, are far and away the poorest in the five-county region, consisting of Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton and Gwinnett counties. This core is surrounded by eight suburban school districts most of whose students are white. The area is less fragmented educationally than most metropolitan regions because most suburban students are in a few county-wide districts. Several of these suburban districts rival the Atlanta city school system in size, and one, DeKalb County, actually has several thousand more high school students. Certain suburban districts have exhibited spectacular growth, in comparison with the shrinking Atlanta system.

Between 1972 and 1985 the city's high school enrollment dropped by 25%, while nearly every other district in the region grew. As a result, the proportion of the metropolitan region's high school students attending city schools dropped noticeably, until 1985, 80% of all public high school students in the region attended suburban high schools. In 1986, just over half of the region's black students went to school in the suburbs as did 90% of the white students.

The two districts which accounted for most of the suburban growth in that time period were in the regions of economic boom, Gwinnett County and Cobb County schools. Between 1975 and 1985 Gwinnett County's high school enrollment nearly doubled, while Cobb County's increased by about 15%. Their combined share of the metropolitan public high school enrollment increased from 24% to 32%.

Although an increasingly large proportion of metropolitan Atlanta's black public high school students attend suburban schools, Atlanta City schools have very few whites, and most suburban districts have very few blacks. Unlike many northern cities, by the mid-1980s Atlanta's schools had been overwhelmingly black for well over a decade. As far back as 1972, Atlanta's high schools were 77% black and, by 1978, they were 90% black. Fully 92.9% of the city's high school students were black by 1986, and only three of the city's 20 high schools had a student population of more than 10% white.

In contrast, blacks made up less than 20% of the suburban high school population and were concentrated in the less prosperous southern suburbs. The DeKalb County school district had the second most rapid increase in black enrollment among all large US school districts, rising from 5% black in 1967 to 32% in 1980 and 47% in 1986. (Orfield and Monfort 1988: 10). As in some suburban districts, most noticeably the burgeoning Gwinnett and Cobb County systems, blacks represented a tiny minority. In 1986, they made up only 2.2% of the Gwinnett County high school population and represented 4.6% of Cobb County high school students. In Gwinnett County one major high school did not have even a single black student.

All but one of the 10 metropolitan Atlanta high schools with the largest proportion of black students were located in the city of Atlanta. That one school, Gordon High, was located just to the east of the city in nearby DeKalb County. These 10 schools had black populations ranging from 99.3% to 99.9%. Not surprisingly, the 10 schools with the smallest percentage of black students all were located in suburban districts. Four of these schools were located in Gwinnett County.

The shrinkage of the city system meant that suburban schools enrolled a larger share of the area's black students. In 1986, just over 50% of all blacks attended suburban schools, although only 22.5% of the suburban high schools students were black. This suburban increase came at a time when the overall percentage of black high students in the region had dropped slightly, from 38% in 1980 to 37% in 1986, reflecting both rapid white in-migration into the greater Atlanta job market and the city's rising dropout rate.

The bulk of suburban blacks attended a handful of high schools in nearby Fulton and DeKalb Counties. By 1986, these two counties combined had almost as large a black high school population as the Atlanta Public Schools. A number of the schools in these counties were just as segregated as those in the city but, in several notable cases, black students in these districts attended integrated high schools. The only other suburban schools with large black enrollments were Decatur High School in the small, mostly black Decatur city school system, and North Clayton High School, in Clayton County. Table 1 describes the distribution of black students in metro Atlanta in 1986.

The economic disparities between inner city and suburban schools in metropolitan Atlanta are even greater than the disparity in racial backgrounds. The correlation between being black and attending city schools, 0.6, was high (a correlation of 1 indicates a perfect statistical correspondence between two factors and a correlation of 0 indicates no

Table 1. Distribution of black students in metropolitan Atlanta in 1986.

System	% black	% of area black students
Atlanta	92.9	49.4
Decatur	71.9	1.0
DeKalb	43.1	32.2
Fulton	37.4*	10.7
Marietta	29.2*	0.9
Buford	29.1**	0.3
Clayton	12.4	2.3
Cobb	4.6	2.3
Gwinnett	2.2	0.8
METRO TOTAL	36.6	

* 1986 data unavailable, 1984 substituted.
** 1986 and 1984 data unavailable, 1982 substituted.

relationship). A correlation of 0.5 is considered a strong relationship in social research, but the correlation between low economic status and attendance at city schools was an astounding 0.86. Nearly three-quarters of the students in Atlanta city schools come from families with incomes so low that they meet the federal guidelines to receive a completely free lunch in their school's cafeteria. By contrast, not a single suburban school district had more than 20% of its students qualify for free lunches except for the small majority-black Decatur City system which had about half the city's level of poor students. The percentage of students receiving free lunches in 1986 is reported in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Percentage of students receiving free lunches in 1986.

District	Percentage receiving free lunches
Atlanta	74.7
Decatur	37.0
DeKalb	18.1
Marietta	17.7
Fulton	15.9
Buford	12.8
Clayton	6.6
Gwinnett	3.8
Cobb	1.9

Changing the focus from districts to individual schools, the contrasts become even more extreme. The 10 poorest schools in metropolitan Atlanta – schools where from 83% to 94% of the students qualified for free lunches – all were located in the Atlanta city school district, while all of the region's 10 wealthiest schools were located in suburban districts. So great was the difference between city and suburban schools that not a single suburban school has as many of its students receiving free lunch as the average Atlanta school. There were no schools without significant poverty within the city; even at the city high school with the fewest low-income students, a selective magnet school, 27% of the students received free lunches.

At the opposite extreme, Cobb County and Gwinnett County, on the average, both had fewer than 5% of their students receiving free lunches, and Clayton County had only a few percentage points more. At all of the region's 10 wealthiest schools less than 1% of the students received free lunches. Four of these schools were located in Cobb County, three in Fulton County, two in Gwinnett County and one in DeKalb County. All but one of these schools were more than 90% white.

Throughout metropolitan Atlanta the percent of low-income students in a school correlated very strongly to the percentage of black students (0.78), but several schools did stand out as notable exceptions. In integrated Fulton and DeKalb Counties the correlation was significantly lower (0.56 in both districts), although black schools still tended to have more free lunch recipients than white schools. In DeKalb County, three high schools – Cedar Grove, Southwest DeKalb and Walker – all were more than 90% black but had less than a fifth of their students receiving free lunches in 1987. Lakeshore and Westwood High schools in Fulton County showed similar percentages. In addition, several integrated high schools in these districts were relatively well-off economically, and integrated Riverwood High in Fulton County was among the region's 10 wealthiest. Another exception was the Atlanta city high school with the fewest free lunch recipients, Benjamin E. Mays High, a school whose science and mathematics magnet program draws students

from throughout the city, and had a student body which was 99% black in 1986, with only 27% of its students getting free lunches. The average city school had about three times as high a concentration of students in poverty.

Not all suburban schools are white and wealthy and not all city schools are poor and black. Nevertheless, virtually every poor school in the region was black, and nearly all of the wealthiest schools were white. The few exceptions were mainly in those suburbs to which the black middle class has fled. As Atlanta's blacks suburbanize they are separating along class lines. The poorest blacks are remaining in the city schools, their wealthier counterparts enter the suburban ring but are heavily concentrated in nearby Fulton and DeKalb county schools. White students, on the other hand, are suburban and relatively wealthy. Thus metropolitan Atlanta is segmented into three regions: the poorest segment is overwhelmingly black and attends city schools; the wealthiest is overwhelmingly white and attends school in the outlying white suburbs. The third segment, composed mainly of middle-class black suburbanites in racially changing neighborhoods, stands between them.

Student performance

It is always difficult and often controversial to measure student performance. No single statistic can ever give a clear picture of a school's success in educating students, and there is no single criterion for a successful school. Nonetheless, just about any criteria for success must include a student's ability to learn basic subjects, advance steadily towards graduation and to score reasonably well on standardized tests. Standardized tests are the only measure of educational achievement that is available for comparison across the metro area. Standardized tests are controversial, for these tests are plagued by the criticism that they are racially and culturally biased, and that they are not good predictors of academic success for some students. A recent federal court decision in New York State found, for example, that the SAT tended to underestimate performance of female students in math. Test results also are confusing because they reflect what students bring with them from home as well as what they learn in school.

We use test scores not because the objections to them lack substance, but because they are the only measurement of learning that is available. They should be interpreted carefully. They do provide a standard statistical basis of comparison for all nine metropolitan Atlanta school districts, and there is no other. They do not measure what the impact of a school has been on the achievement of its students but they do provide an important comparison of the average levels of achievement and competition among schools.

The data

The data on test performance across the metropolitan area were difficult to obtain and analyze. Since different districts use different tests, testing procedures, and norm years in their testing programs, the only comparable data came from tests required of all districts by the Georgia Department of Education. For the years 1972, 1975, and 1976, the scores reported here are the sum of the three TAP tests given to high schools juniors in the Georgia Statewide Testing Program. The 1982 scores combine the 11th grade reading and math scores in the Georgia Criterion Referenced Tests. For 1986 and 1987, the data represent the composite standardized scores for the TAP tests. Systemwide data were

obtained by averaging the scores of all high schools in the district. These measures are very imperfect but the fact that there are strong relationships throughout different testing programs should lend confidence to the general findings.

Tests and the excellence movement

The school reform movement, including the Atlanta programs of Superintendent Alonzo Crim and the state government's Quality Basic Education Act, has lent an extraordinary importance to testing. This movement has used progress in test scores as a central measure of success in school, as an absolute requirement for graduation and, sometimes, even for grade to grade promotion.

Reforms during the 1980s only took the fascination with test scores to an extreme. By the late 1970s most big city districts in the US had been hit by movements strongly emphasizing test scores. Big city superintendents became famous and the public support of their programs increased when they could report substantial test score gains. Georgia's obsession with tests became apparent when it became the first state in the nation to require kindergarten students to take a first grade entrance test. In 1988, one out of every eight six-year-olds was required to repeat kindergarten. The state board dropped the pencil-and-paper component of this test in 1989, but continued to require proficiency in a variety of skills as well as personality and physical development assessments prior to admission to the first grade (*Education Week*, 15 March 1989).

Atlanta's apparent achievement

One of the most remarkable and widely praised set of achievement test claims of the early 1980s came from the Atlanta Public Schools. Pronouncements by Atlanta school officials that a substantial majority of the city's virtually all-black enrollment was achieving above national norms were constantly cited as proof that strong, committed, black educators could overcome the problems of race and poverty within a context of racial and economic segregation. Had they been true, the argument that Atlanta had discovered educational methods bringing equal opportunity to segregated low-income schools would be strongly supported. The reports turned out to be premature, however.

Atlanta School Superintendent Alonzo Crim pledged, in 1980, to bring Atlanta school children to national achievement score norms by 1985. In June of 1983, Dr Crim announced that the goal had already been accomplished. Fifty percent of the city's students, he said, were scoring at the national norm or higher in reading and 55% in math. 'This is just the beginning', he said. 'In an urban system where 80% of our students are poor and 90% are black, historically we've always been at the bottom. We're announcing today that we don't need any special considerations. We can achieve what any students anywhere can achieve.' (*Atlanta Constitution*, 7 June 1983). He claimed that well-run schools could overcome all the disadvantages of isolation and poverty and that he had achieved the fondest hope of urban black educators. He received awards and recognition from across the United States.

Crim summarized his theory in a 1983 statement, 'Community of Believers', which received very wide attention. On coming to Atlanta a decade earlier, he said, he wanted to raise poor black children 'to achievement levels equal to or better than the national average'. He opposed metropolitan school desegregation and adopted a strategy aimed at insuring

that schools would 'develop a community of believers' including 'peers, parents, educators at all levels, business persons, members of the clergy, and citizens at large'. Students were to be seen as 'winners' and given evidence that achievement led to success. He called for 'thousands of conscious, decentralized experiments that caring adults will attempt to drive students on'. Ending the court's desegregation order, he said, brought a 'sense of relief' and facilitated refocusing attention on test scores, a leading concern of parents in community meetings. Plans were developed and carefully monitored at all levels of the district to focus attention on skills and achievement. Crim wrote, in early 1983, that the effort had produced 'continuous improvement' since 1976 and that the goal of meeting national norms in five years of intensive effort beginning in 1980 was being realized faster than expected. He said that the 'involvement of parents and the general community in the job of positively developing the minds of our children' would result in the district being at 'national norm at all grade levels by 1985'. Crim quoted the remarks of Ernest Boyer of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, who was leading a national study of high schools, after visiting Atlanta high schools in 1981 as a reflection of the recognition that the district was receiving:

> ... we saw a school system that was healthy and where academic priorities were clearly understood and where progress was being made ...
>
> In my experience, schools are adrift because they academic goals are unclear. Certainly, there are problems, but they are enormously benefited by the common agreement on what they're [trying to do]. (Crim 1983).

The parade of announcements of success continued. In 1984, Dr Crim announced that 53% of the city's students were achieving above the national norms in reading and 60% in math. 'We have come a long way in a relatively short period of time', said the Superintendent (*Atlanta Constitution*, 2 June 1984). The *Atlanta Constitution* called the results 'gratifying proof' of the district's accomplishments (15 August 1984). The 1985 data were even better; they showed 56% performing at or above national norms in reading and 63% in math (*Atlanta Constitution*, 7 June 1986).

Evidence of failure

The claims of the Atlanta schools to have overcome the problems of race and poverty began to break down, however, when the state government began to issue test data directly comparing the school districts. The reforms enacted by the Georgia legislature mandated the use of the more demanding Iowa Basic Skills Test and public release of achievement scores. When the state policy was adopted, Superintendent Crim predicted that the result would be a 10 to 15% drop in the city's scores, relative to the national norm (*Atlanta Constitution*, 7 June 1986). Obviously the Atlanta administrators knew the consequences of choosing different yardsticks for measuring achievement.

The first statewide data, released in 1986, showed that Atlanta children were doing well in the early elementary years, which may have reflected both Crim's intense basic skills emphasis and the policy of flunking a large fraction of the children in the early grades if they did not achieve. By ninth grade, however, the test data showed that Atlanta children were 20 points behind the national norm. Even among the group of Georgia school districts with socio-economic characteristics similar to Atlanta, this widely praised school district came in last in the state at the ninth grade level (*Atlanta Constitution*, 7 June 1986). Atlanta high school students had the worst record in the state in passing the Georgia Basic Skills Test, required for graduation from high school (ibid., 14 November

1986). A school district that had made proud claims of solving the whole achievement problem came in behind the state's poor, rural, majority black districts. It was obvious that the gains made in the early grades did not carry over to high school.

The 1988 test results, reporting on the third year of the Georgia testing reforms, showed Atlanta slightly above state-wide norms at the 2nd grade, below at the 4th and 7th grades, and very sharply lower at ninth grade. At the ninth grade level, more than 140 of Georgia's 186 school districts scored higher than the Atlanta Public Schools. Atlanta ranked at the 36th percentile on the norms used by the state while Cobb and Gwinnett County schools each ranked at the 64 percentile and the DeKalb and Fulton County systems were also significantly above the norm. The state report showed that most large Georgia systems with more than a fifth of their students eligible for free lunch were below the norm but that the Atlanta system had the lowest scores. On the required state math tests, 39% of Atlanta's tenth graders failed as did 21% of those taking the writing test. In Gwinnet County the failure rates were 9% for math and 7% for writing (Georgia Department of Education 1988: tables 4, 6a, 6b, 11).

The publication of comparable data using the same yardstick for all school districts in Georgia consistently showed great differences between the city and suburban schools and school districts. These data show a very strong persisting relationship between family income, race and achievement levels across metropolitan Atlanta even after a generation of reform in city schools.

The nature of the deception

The scores that the school system had been reporting had been deceptive. The district was using a less competitive base test, the California Achievement Test (CAT) and the district used norms established back in 1978 when average test scores across the nation were considerably lower, particularly in the early grades. The new state testing program used a more demanding test with a 1984 norm year. Two other policies also tended to produce deceptively high scores. The school district had begun flunking very large numbers of students. A student repeating second grade and taking the second grade test would, for example, look more successful in terms of his or her test scores than if he or she had to take the third grade test. The district also allowed children functioning well behind their grade levels to take the test for the grade level at which they were functioning, rather than the grade they were in; a third grader functioning on the first grade level could be given the first grade test. Commenting on a draft of this study, Superintendent Crim explained it this way:

> The CAT was administered to Atlanta pupils based on their functional levels, not their grade levels. However, there were established parameters. First, no child was administered a test level more than two levels below grade placement. Second, if a pupil in grade 6 took a fourth grade test, he [*sic*] was compared to sixth graders taking the fourth grade test, not other fourth graders. Last, functional level norms tables, rather than on-grade level norms, were used for all functional level testing. (Letter to authors, 24 June 1988: 4).

Dr Crim claimed that this procedure actually deflated scores and that the number of students tested on-grade increased until, in 1985, it included almost all first graders and three-fourths of all eighth graders (ibid.). It was nonetheless true that, under this system, a child old enough for eighth grade could have been retained two or more grades, been placed in sixth grade, given a fourth grade test, and then compared only to other sixth graders who had to take the fourth grade test.

Such deceptive practices are not unique to Atlanta. They have been used by other

urban school districts, and states, and doubtless by suburban districts, to inflate apparent test score accomplishments. The problem is that they convince parents and community leaders that school systems are doing much better in preparing children to compete at the later stages of education and employment than is actually true. If Atlanta students were actually achieving at national norms, for example, the dismal problem of declining completion rates for black collegians in local colleges might not be so severe.

A 1987 study showed that all states are reporting average test scores above the national norm, an obvious impossibility. The Friends for Education study reported that all states were reporting average scores above national norms in elementary grades as were 82% of surveyed local districts. The reported test results, the study concluded, 'give children, parents, school systems, legislatures, and the press misleading reports on achievement levels'. A basic problem, according to the study, is the delay in updating test norms by the major test publishing companies (*New York Times*, 28 November 1987). This enabled education officials in all the states to take tough reform-minded positions and all come out winners. Atlanta Public Schools has a lot of company in reporting misleading test scores.

Superintendent Crim's successor, Superintendent J. Jerome Harris, continued the intense focus on test scores, even threatening to seize control of the schools with the worst record and proposing bonuses to employees for higher scores. He admitted, however, that Atlanta test scores were very weak and set his initial goal as simply moving out from the 'bottom five' of school districts in Georgia. The transformation from the school district's sweeping claims of the recent past was striking (*Education Week*, 3 May 1989: 1, 23).

Metropolitan Atlanta achievement comparisons

In the last decade and a half, Atlanta area students have participated in a variety of standardized tests. The differences between inner-city and suburban scores have remained striking while the variation among the suburban districts has been modest. In 1987, the average student in Atlanta City high schools received a standardized composite score of 157.3 on the Georgia Test of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP), a standardized test which measures math and reading skills and is administered throughout the state. The average suburbanite scored 176.1 – nearly 20 points higher. By contrast, there was less than an 8-point differential between the highest scoring and lowest scoring suburban districts (Gwinnett County with 181.4 and Buford with 173.4). Similar findings were reported on the Basic Skills Tests administered annually to measure students' reading and mathematical skills. Table 3, below, shows that city and suburban districts both improved their scores slightly over the five year period from 1982 to 1986, during a spate of education reform. The city/suburban gap was 31 points in 1983 and 29 points four years later.

Table 3. Basic skills test scores.

	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
City	625	623	630	632	632
Suburbs	*656*	*657*	*659*	*661*	*661*
Difference	31	34	29	29	29

Most of the disparity between city and suburban performance on standardized tests is related to demographic differences. The correlations between race, poverty and low scores were extremely high. Simply put, low-income black schools almost invariably scored below their wealthier white counterparts, and, in metro Atlanta, these poor black schools were concentrated in the inner city. The correlation between the percentage of black students in a school and low test scores was a remarkable 0.81 in 1987, while the correlation between low income and low test scores was virtually identical at 0.80. These figures indicate that, given any group of metropolitan Atlanta high schools, one can predict with a great deal of certainty how they will perform on standardized tests solely on the basis of students' family income or race (since the two are very highly related), without any information about educational programs. The fact that race and income are so highly related means, of course, that it is all too easy to attribute to race what may well be due to differences in family income, education, and other critical factors. If there were low-income white high schools in metropolitan Atlanta they would doubtless also show considerable educational problems. Because of the extreme and growing racial gap in income and the fact that poor whites rarely live in concentrated poverty areas in the Atlanta area there are simply no such schools. In fact, data gathered for the Metropolitan Opportunity Project found no predominantly low-income white high schools in *any* of the metropolitan areas studied.

The role of race and income in predicting standardized test scores becomes strikingly clear when we compare the region's richest and poorest, and its blackest and whitest schools as shown in Figures 1 through 3. Atlanta's most impoverished schools – ten area high schools with the most students receiving free lunches – had an average TAP score of 151.0 in 1987. Scores ranged from a low of 143.2 at Price High to a high of 163.1 at Grady High. All ten of these schools were located in the city, and all except Grady, with the

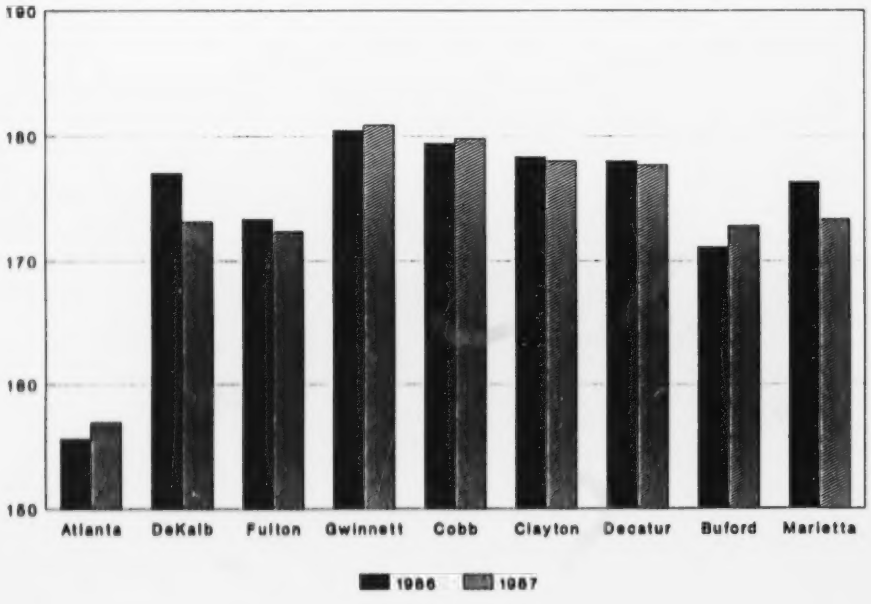

Figure 1. TAP scores for metro Atlanta.

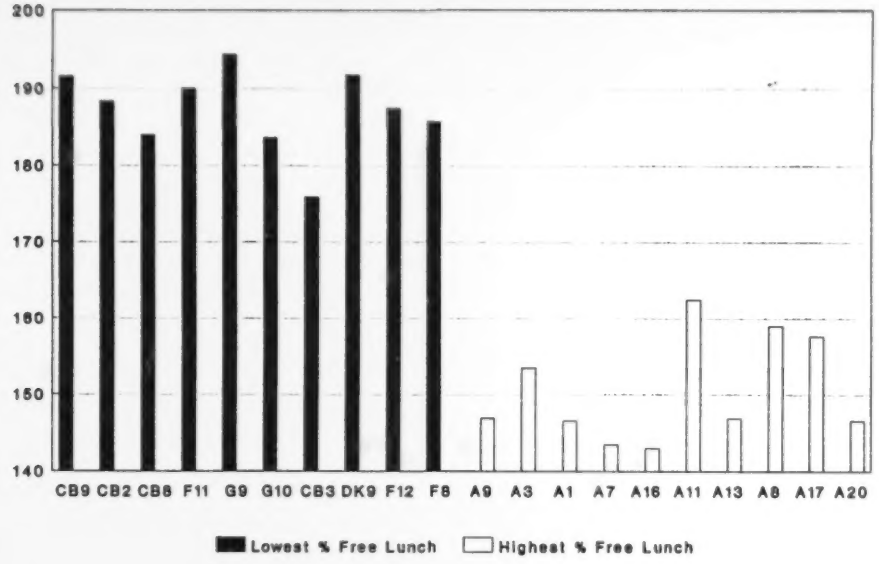

Figure 2. 1987 TAP scores for metro Atlanta high schools.

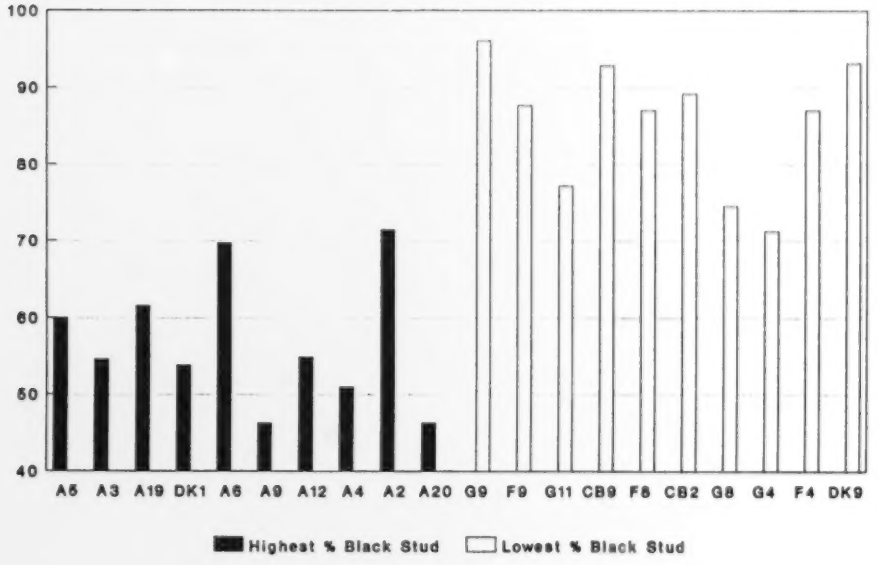

Figure 3. 1987 TAP scores for metro Atlanta high schools.

highest test scores of the group, were more than 90% black. Grady's population is mixed because of a magnet program in communications operating there since 1981. Contrasting with these low scores are metropolitan Atlanta's ten wealthiest high schools. They averaged 188.9 on the TAP in 1987, nearly 38 points higher than the ten poorest schools. These wealthy schools' scores ranged from 177.6 at McEachern High (Cobb County) to 195.9 at Parkview High (Gwinnett County). All ten of these schools are suburban and all had substantial white majorities. Only one wealthy school, Riverwood High in Fulton County, had a significant black population (9% in 1986, 16% in 1987). On average, these schools were 6% black. *In none did the low-income student population exceed 1% of the total.*

Comparison of the ten schools with the largest and smallest percentages of blacks shows a similar difference in scores – nearly 29 points in 1987. Not surprisingly, five of the whitest schools were also on the list of the ten richest schools, and three of the blackest schools were on the list of the ten poorest schools. Among the schools with the highest proportion of blacks, TAP scores ranged from 146.8 at West Fulton and Carver to 171.6 at Mays High (all in Atlanta), while among the white schools they varied from 171.3 (Dacula High in Gwinnett County) to 195.9 for Gwinnett County's Parkview High. Mays High School in Atlanta, the one black school to score comparably to the overwhelmingly white schools on the 1987 TAP, includes a math and science magnet program and the school's selective student body receives fewer free lunches than any in the city. Magnet programs screen students by test scores or grades and their higher test score results are built in by the selection process.

Table 4. Average test scores and poverty levels for white, black, and integrated high schools in metro Atlanta.

	Percentage Black	Percentage receiving free lunches	Average score
Black city schools	98.3	77.5	154.6
Black suburban schools	94.7	23.9	162.0
Integrated suburban schools	45.9	20.6	172.9
White suburban schools	7.0	6.0	180.2
Metro average	36.6	27.2	171.9

In metro Atlanta, suburban schools with a substantial black working or middle class enrollment perform only a little better on tests than do their less advantaged counterparts in the inner-city (as shown in Table 4). In 1986, there were nine overwhelmingly black (75–100% black) high schools in the racially changing parts of the suburbs. These schools were not nearly as poor as the inner-city schools. With an average of 24% of their students receiving free lunches, they were slightly better off than the average metropolitan Atlanta school. Yet these schools still scored far below the metropolitan average. The highest scoring of the nine schools, Southwest DeKalb High School, scored 4 points *below* the metropolitan-wide average. As a group, the black suburban schools averaged a score of 162, only 7 points better than the much poorer city schools. These segregated black suburban schools were also suffering the effects of earlier racial discrimination – such as lowered performance expectations and less adequate parental education.

Racially integrated suburban schools (25–75% black) scored much better than their black suburban counterparts, despite the fact that they had almost as many low-income

Table 5. Percentage of black students in selected area high schools.

	1976	1982	1986	1987
Ten schools with best test scores	1.7	4.9	8.0	6.1
Ten schools with worst test scores	96.8	94.8	98.2	98.7

students (21% v 24% free lunches). These integrated schools scored slightly above the metropolitan mean and almost twelve points better on achievement tests than the predominately black suburban schools. Thus, independent of student economic status, racial composition appears to help determine how well schools perform on these tests. In the Atlanta region, predominately black schools, no matter what their economic composition, are normally outperformed by integrated and white schools. It is important, however, not to overstate the racial factor. On average, for example, black suburban schools had about twice as many low-income students as their white counterparts.

Over the past decade metropolitan Atlanta's top ten test taking schools have consistently been overwhelmingly white, while the bottom ten have been almost all-black. The percentages, as shown above in Table 5, have remained relatively stable, though both the best scoring and worst scoring schools are slowly gaining a larger proportion of black students. The list of the top ten schools has exhibited the most racial change, moving from less than 2% black in 1976 to 6% in 1987. In 1976, not a single one of the top ten schools was more than 5% black, but by 1982 two were more than 10% black. And by 1986, three were about one-tenth black. Two of these schools, Riverwood and DeKalb County's Chamblee High School, had both been in the top ten in 1976, but at that time Riverwood had virtually no black students and Chamblee less than 5%. At these suburban high schools, significant integration did not remove them from the list of the region's highest achieving schools. A tiny fraction of black suburban families gained access to the region's best schools, while the great majority remain in segregated, poorly performing schools.

In sum, test results are strongly related to both the racial composition and the income level of the student body. These factors are, in turn, very strongly related to each other. That is, there is a large and growing racial gap in income. Race and poverty are also linked to other factors such as parental education, family status, health, and a variety of neighborhood conditions. Poor black students in the overwhelmingly poor black inner city schools score far below all other students in the region, yet some affluent suburban schools with significant black minorities are among the highest scoring schools in the metro area. Conversely, the few suburban schools which are virtually all black perform nearly as badly as their much poorer city neighbors. In metro Atlanta white schools and integrated middle class schools outperform all other schools on standardized tests while overwhelmingly black schools, whatever their economic makeup, do worse.

Is integration the solution?

It is tempting to conclude that integration powerfully affects student achievement, since integrated schools perform so much better than other schools with larger black populations. However, the data developed in this study are inadequate to support such a conclusion. These data average the scores for all students in a school. Without separate test scores for blacks and whites within integrated schools, for example, we cannot

examine the effect of integration on either the black or the white students. These data show only that integrated schools have a higher average test performance than segregated schools.

While the effects of school desegregation could not be determined in metropolitan Atlanta, the significant differences in achievement separating segregated and integrated schools of similar economic levels make it appropriate to review what two generations of research on school desegregation have shown. The most thorough recent review of evidence on desegregation was commissioned by the Connecticut State Department of Education and carried out by Professor Janet Scofield of the University of Pittsburgh (Scofield 1988). After reviewing hundreds of studies, she concluded that published studies are limited in scope and methods – most focusing on narrrow questions of academic achievement in the first year of integration. Despite these limitations, she found convincing evidence that desegregation has a modest positive effect on the achievement of black students and that this effect can be increased by proper implementation, including positive programs encouraging students to work together on academic assignments. There is significant evidence to support the proposition that beginning desegregation in the first grade strengthens the achievement effect, as does desegregating low income children in predominantly middle class suburban schools. The evidence is overwhelming that desegregation does not hurt the achievement of white children (Scofield 1988).

Research completed during the last decade suggests that the most dramatic impacts of desegregation may be in areas other than achievement test scores. Important work at Johns Hopkins University, for example, shows that students attending desegregated schools are more likely to attend selective colleges, more likely to major in science and math-related fields, more likely to find employment in the growth sectors of the economy that require working in predominantly white settings, and more likely to live in integrated neighborhoods as adults (Scofield 1988, Braddock 1987). In other words, students attending integrated schools have a better chance of making it across the color line in metropolitan society on a number of dimensions.

Attrition

The second ingredient in the recipe for a successful school is its ability to keep students achieving at their grade level and in school until graduation. Success in this respect can be assessed by comparing enrollment figures for each grade level over a period of years to find out what percent drop out.

Determining the attrition rate for students in metro Atlanta proved to be a task of surprising difficulty. Overall rates for each city school were difficult enough to obtain, but the rates by race within the city and the suburbs were much harder to secure. As has been true in most area studied by the Metropolitan Opportunity Project, the drop-out rates reported by school officials in metro Atlanta has very little relationship to the real level of attrition in the schools. Such figures usually report only the loss in a single school year, often omitting those who dropped out during the summer.

The important indicator of attrition is the relationship between the number of students graduating each year and the number that started high school four years earlier. Hence, a major effort was invested in obtaining data on enrollment by grade, by race, by school and by year in order to do the calculations. Extensive work was needed to assemble existing records and to copy handwritten documents from the Georgia State Archives.

The importance of reaching independent estimates of drop-out rates should be

evident from a consideration of the rates traditionally reported by the Atlanta Public Schools. The school district, using a long established definition, reported a drop-out rate of 4.7% for the 1986–87 school year. The estimate produced in a working paper released by this project (Peskin 1987) was 39%, eight times as high. Subsequently, the district, using a revised definition of drop-out, produced a revised estimate of 10.3% for the year and a longitudinal cohort analysis estimate of 26.5%, still only two-thirds of the Peskin estimate. This range of difference is by no means unique to Atlanta. Problems of drop-out definition interact with student school-to-school transiency to obscure the true picture in most districts. Suburban districts rarely report more than a small fraction of their true drop-out rates. Quite obviously, when estimates of the student drop-out rate vary by more than 800% from one calculation to another, there will be vigorous disagreements over the scale of the problem, stimulating sharp differences in the sense of complacency or urgency associated with the problem.

Trends in attrition

A significantly higher fraction of Atlanta area high school students completed their high school educations in 1986 than a decade earlier. This improvement held true for every school district in the metropolitan area – city as well as suburban, black as well as white. In addition, the gap between the mostly black Atlanta city schools and the predominately white suburban districts narrowed over the course of the decade. Yet, students in city schools and majority black schools still are less likely to graduate.

Because of incomplete data on totals of Atlanta area high school graduates it is useful to first examine the percentage of students who fail to reach twelfth grade as well as the percentage of students who fail to graduate. The twelfth grade attrition rate (the percentage dropping out before twelfth grade) is calculated by dividing the number of twelfth graders in a given year by the number of ninth graders entering high school four years earlier. Unfortunately, no data exist in Georgia which would make it possible to trace individual students throughout their high school careers and thus accurately and conclusively determine how many students drop out of school. Attrition rates are the only way to compare the drop-out level among districts during this period and offer the best approximation of the number of students dropping out of school. The attrition rate is not adjusted for the fact that some districts have more students transferring out than transferring in. It also does not take into consideration demographic shifts or students who take longer than four years to complete their secondary educations. While this method is far from perfect, it is the best available, and it is also used by the US Department of Education in making state and regional comparisons.

On the metropolitan level, this data no doubt understate the true dropout rate. The enormous growth of the Atlanta metropolitan area means that there are many more school age young people moving into the region than leaving it. Hence, some of those graduating each year are the product of net migration from other regions, not the success of local schools. If information were available to control statistically for migration, the reported dropout rate would be slightly higher. There are also migration effects within the metropolitan area. Since the Atlanta and Decatur public schools have long-term trends of declining enrollments, a small portion of the drop-out rate reported there is actually the product of net out-migration. If it were possible to study these cities' drop-out rates more precisely, the figure would be slightly lower. Exactly the opposite is true for the rapidly growing suburban districts. In-migration makes their drop-out rates appear slightly lower than they actually are.

The limitations are worrisome. Detailed studies in the Chicago Public Schools show, however, that the method used here produces much more accurate estimates than those traditionally reported by state and local administrators. One such study of student records in Chicago produced statistics very much closer to those developed from this kind of attrition analysis than to those that had previously been reported by school officials (Chicago Panel on Public School Finances, 'Dropouts from the Chicago Public Schools', April 1985).

Twelfth grade attrition

The Georgia data show, in Table 6, that in 1985, the Atlanta city high schools had the highest twelfth grade attrition rate of any of the six major school districts in the metropolitan area (29%), while Clayton County high schools had the lowest (18%). The small Marietta city and Decatur city districts both had much higher rates than the Atlanta city schools, but among the major districts, the range of attrition rates over the Atlanta region was less than 12%. By comparison, the range between twelfth grade attrition rates in the same districts had been 20% a decade earlier.

Table 6. 12th grade attrition rates.

System	1975	1985	Percentage change
Atlanta	45.8%	29.1%	-16.7%
DeKalb	25.7%	23.1%	-2.6%
Fulton	27.7%	27.0%	-0.7%
Gwinnett*	36.6%	21.0%	-15.5%
Clayton	32.5%	17.5%	-25.0%
Cobb	27.3%	20.4%	-6.9%
Buford	45.0%	28.9%	-16.1%
Marietta	40.6%	39.1%	-1.5%
Decatur	47.4%	42.2%	-5.2%

* 1975 data missing, 1976 substituted.

While the differences in attrition among the nine metropolitan Atlanta school systems were becoming less pronounced, the narrowing of the gap between the city and suburban schools was particularly significant. In 1975, Atlanta's attrition rate was 18% higher than the suburban rate. But the twelfth grade attrition rate for Atlanta city schools declined by nearly 17% over the decade from 1975 to 1985, more than triple the 5% improvement in suburban schools, and by 1983 the gap between city and suburban twelfth grade attrition rates had nearly disappeared, before beginning to widen again in 1984, as shown in Figure 4.

Suburban and city rates were probably even more similar than the above statistics would indicate since they do not take migration effects into consideration. While Atlanta city schools were steadily losing students over the decade from 1975 to 1985 many of the suburban districts were burgeoning, and the suburbs as a whole increased their high school enrollments more than 19% from 1975 to 1985, while the city of Atlanta's high school enrollment dropped 25%.

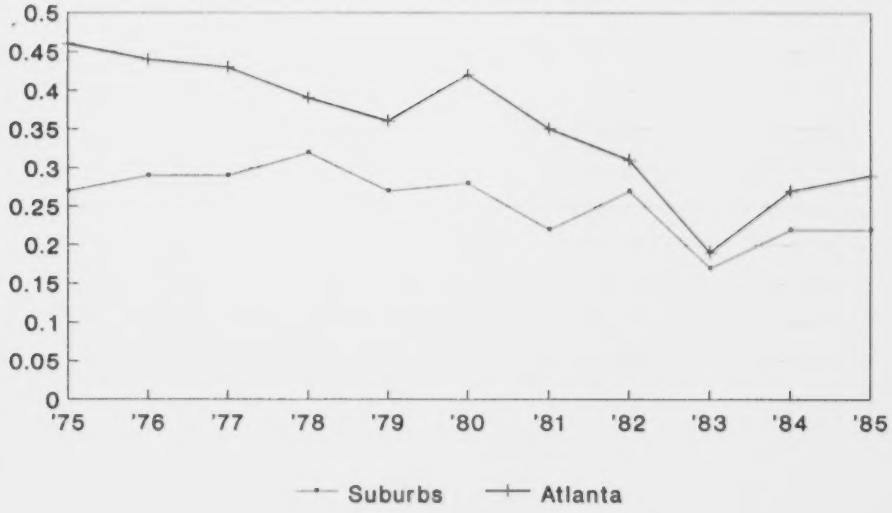

Figure 4. 12th grade attrition rate for Atlanta city high schools and suburban districts.

Narrowing of the attrition gap was facilitated by the lackluster performances of two major suburban districts serving the most black students as well the city's substantial improvement. From 1975 to 1985, Fulton County's attrition rate decreased by only 0.7%, while DeKalb's decreased by 2.6%. By 1985, more than one-third of the students in each of these districts were black. There were significant improvements in completion rates in the overwhelmingly white districts.

Graduation rates

Since 1977, more than half a million Georgia high school students have failed to graduate. That figure averages out to 53,000 students a year (unpublished table, Georgia Department of Education 1987). The percentage of Georgia ninth graders who do not go on to graduate from high school has remained fairly consistently around the 38% mark. As shown in Table 7, it was 37% in 1986. Only four southern states – Louisiana, Florida, Mississippi and South Carolina – had higher attrition rates than Georgia, and states such as Virginia and Arkansas had rates that were more than 10 percentage points lower than Georgia's (Southern Regional Education Board, June 1987). This high statewide attrition rate is reflected in the metropolitan Atlanta high schools. While data on the number of graduates per district are less complete than that for twelfth grade enrollment, it is clear that a smaller percentage of city freshmen eventually received high school diplomas than did their suburban counterparts, with the exception of the small, poor and heavily black Decatur City system.

The graduation attrition rate in the Atlanta city schools was significantly higher than in the suburbs. All the suburban districts, except for the Decatur city schools, had graduation attrition rates well below that statewide rate, while Atlanta's was 2% higher. In general, the Atlanta city graduation attrition rate was worse than the statewide rate,

Table 7. 1986 graduation attrition rates*.

System	Rate (%)
Atlanta	39.3
DeKalb	31.8
Fulton	28.5
Gwinnett	29.0
Clayton	31.0
Cobb	27.3
Decatur	46.5
STATEWIDE	37.3

* Figures for Fulton County, Marietta and Buford were not available.

while the combined suburban rate was considerably better. Migration of students across district boundaries accounts for some of this difference.

Although a great deal of attention has focused in recent years on dropouts in central cities, one of the major findings of the metro Atlanta study, as well as a parallel study in Houston by the Metropolitan Opportunity Project, is that the suburbs have similarly high drop-out rates that are receiving little, if any, policy attention. Drop-outs are generally seen by the public as a problem of little consequence in affluent systems. The data show, however, that the booming Cobb and Gwinnett County systems have rates of 27% and 29% respectively. These rates cannot be explained by social and economic or racial factors and should be matters of urgent public concern for communities where a surprisingly large fraction of the next generation is facing a serious prospect of downward economic mobility.

Race and attrition at the school level

The difference between the graduation attrition rates for predominately black high schools (75–100% black) and predominately white (0–25% black) high schools was more pronounced than the difference between suburban and city rates as shown in Figure 5. In 1986, the difference between suburban and city graduation attrition rates was 9%, while the rate for predominately black schools was 12% higher than that for predominantly white schools. More integrated schools (25–75% black) generally fell between these two extremes, but their recent graduation attrition rates have been closer to those of the white schools.

The gap between black and white schools is, in part, just a reflection of the gap between suburban and city schools. All but three of the city's twenty high schools had black populations greater than 90% in 1986. However, five of the predominately black high schools were located in DeKalb County in 1986 and two were located in Fulton County, so the gap between black and white schools can not be entirely laid to the city/suburban split. In addition, the three Atlanta city high schools with fewer than 75% black students had graduation attrition rates of 23% to 28%, much lower than the Atlanta city systemwide rate of 39%, and also lower than the regional rate of 31% for high schools with 25–75% black populations. Overwhelmingly black schools fared the worst in preventing dropouts, while integrated and predominantly white schools had significantly better records. This gap is demonstrated in Table 8.

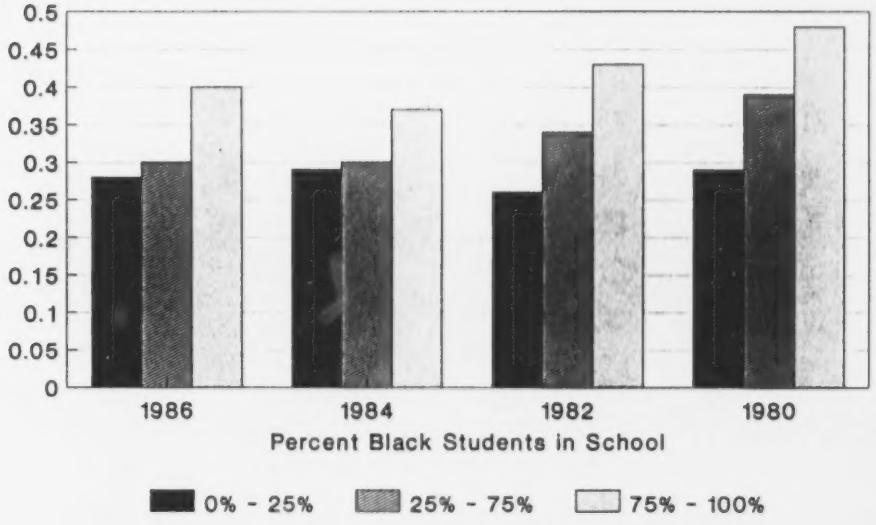

Figure 5. Graduation attrition rate for Atlanta high schools grouped by percentage of black students.

Table 8. Graduate attrition rates for black, white and integrated schools.

	Graduate attrition	Percentage black
Black city schools	41.5	94.7
Black suburban schools	45.7	98.3
Integrated suburban schools	34.5	45.9
Metro average	35.1	36.6

Surprisingly, middle class black suburban schools had graduation attrition rates that were even worse than those of their poorer inner-city counterparts. Lakeshore High School in suburban Fulton County, for example, was 99% black with only 21% of its students qualifying for free lunches. The graduation attrition rate in this school reached 58%, indicating that students entering that school had less than a 50–50 chance of graduating four years later. On the average, the graduate attrition rate for the predominately black suburban schools was 4% higher than for city schools. The reasons for this difference are unclear. Black suburban schools many offer less remediation or support than city schools, or they may be caught up in more rigid tracking, which could leave the underachievers in the hands of teachers with even lower expectations than their counterparts in the city. Or it may be that suburban districts are enforcing higher and more rigid graduation requirements or that students are lured away by the greater availability of jobs. The absence of sufficient black faculty and staff and the persistence of discrimination are other possible explanations. In any case, these drop-out data suggest an urgent need for close scrutiny of suburban districts as they experience racial change.

As was true in the achievement data, the drop-out statistics make it apparent that black families who leave the city but end up in all black suburban schools do not obtain the enhanced opportunities for their children that normally come with suburbanization.

Atlanta area drop-outs, many of them no doubt the children of parents who were able to work their way out of the inner-city ghetto, probably will not be able to match, let alone surpass, their parents' economic status without high school diplomas.

Attendance

If students do not attend school they cannot benefit from it. Schools in the Atlanta area report high attendance levels. In metropolitan Atlanta good school level attendance rates correlate quite strongly with high test scores (0.66) and negatively with dropout rates (−0.28). The range of average daily attendance in metropolitan Atlanta is not particularly wide – from 90.1% in the city to 94.5% in Buford – but the city rate is consistently lower than the suburban rates.

Just as black and low-income students tend to score more poorly on standardized tests and drop out of school more often than white and higher income students, they also have poorer attendance records. The correlation between low income and poor attendance was quite strong in 1985 (0.66), and the correlation between percent of white students and attendance also was positive (0.38), though much weaker than the relationship between race and test scores. While schools with the best attendance rates tend to be wealthier and whiter than the schools with the worst attendance, the ten schools with the best attendance records in 1985 were, on the average, 50.4% black, and two of them were located in the city. In some schools with substantial black enrollments the administrators and parents had solved the attendance problem. However, nine of the ten schools with the worst attendance were located in the city and averaged 87% black enrollment. Students who are habitually absent from the class are at a disadvantage, and in metropolitan Atlanta those schools most affected are poor and black.

Funding

Many believe that the most important factor in determining the success of a school system is how much money that system has to spend. In spite of a generation of research showing that the most important influences on achievement are family background, the background of the other students in the school, and the quality of the teachers, urban school leaders often insist that the reason that the suburban schools do better is that they spend much more money. The data reveal, however, the system with the most funding per student was the least successful. The Atlanta city schools spent far more per student ($4195) than any of the other six major districts, yet they performed much worse in every category considered. Even when comparisons are restricted to 'instructional costs' per pupil, Atlanta ranked second, behind the city of Marietta, as shown in Table 9. In fact, the amount spent on instructional costs shows a very negative correlation to standardized test scores (−0.70) and a positive correlation to high attrition rates (0.90).

Merely raising the per pupil expenditure is, obviously, no panacea for solving equal opportunity problems. Even if there are clear benefits associated with compensatory programs – and early grade achievement evidence from federal Head Start and Chapter 1 programs suggests that there are – the gaps may be so large that current expenditures differences are simply insufficient to reverse the effects of demography and history (Koretz 1986, 1987). It is possible, of course, that compensatory funds spent in different ways could have larger effects. The negative correlations in current data are doubtless spurious.

Table 9. 1985–1986 cost per pupil in average daily attendance.

System	Instructional Cost	Total Cost
Atlanta	$2104.37	$4195.29
Buford	$1502.14	$2624.05
Clayton	$1632.42	$2699.87
Cobb	$1486.52	$2555.00
Decatur	$2049.47	$3697.52
DeKalb	$2010.62	$3573.22
Fulton	$1952.24	$3529.62
Gwinnett	$1491.01	$2521.83
Marietta	$2371.89	$4254.49

Surely, spending more money does not *cause* lower achievement. Rather, the increased revenue available to schools with high concentrations of low income and low achieving students is simply insufficient to overcome current disadvantages, even when it helps. Family factors continue to be the most important influences on student achievement. And money does not necessarily change either the educational level of the other students or the quality of the teachers – the other factors having high impact on achievement. Supplies, equipment, computers, class size, and almost everything else rank far below these three basic resources in predicting school effectiveness.

Superintendent Alonzo Crim put the issue in clear perspective. He argued that we should think about spending in large city school districts in a different way. 'Systems with high percentages of economically deprived students', he said, 'would be expected to spend more just to provide the basic foundation which more affluent students bring with them to school and which more affluent parents provide in resources to the school' (letter to author, 25 June 1988). This is a very important issue. Chapter 1 federal dollars and funds for physically and mentally handicapped students, both of whom are found in disproportionately large numbers in city systems, provide extraordinary expenditures just to support the teaching of basic skills, assumed to be routinely learned by students in middle class schools. Dollars targeted in that way may help, but still may leave students behind their more privileged counterparts. They may aid in early grade basic skills acquisition without narrowing gaps in the high school grades. This would not show that spending was wasteful or without benefit, but only that it was not sufficient to overcome disadvantages and create an equal opportunity school system. Much more radical differences in funding or an attack on the underlying structures of inequality, such as race and class segregation or job and income differences among families may be necessary to achieve additional progress.

Magnet schools and choice

The existing structure of education within metropolitan Atlanta locks large numbers of low income black children into the school district offering the least competitive academic challenges and a low graduation rate. Unless educational opportunities for these students are expanded – perhaps through access to suburban schools outside the Atlanta system – it is very important to consider what options are possible *within* the Atlanta Public Schools. On a national level, the most actively discussed policy possiblity is the expansion of student and family choice. President George Bush's 1989 education policy proposals placed

central emphasis on choice and magnet schools, and the approach has been reflected in a growing number of proposals to state legislatures.

Like many contemporary urban school districts, Atlanta has a substantial system of magnet programs within its high schools. Atlanta is unusual in having no desegregation goals while endorsing the objective of providing educational options. This approach began in the mid-1970s with the creation of a fine arts program. In the early 1980s it expanded substantially with the development of programs specializing in science and math, communications, international studies, and a variety of other subjects. In Atlanta, unlike many other cities, there are no entire schools devoted to special programs. The programs served 212 students on average. None had as many as 500 students when the system was studied in 1988. All but one of the programs had special admission requirements, such as minimum required grades or test scores. Since all of the magnet programs are combined with normal programs in reporting school-wide data, and some are very new, it is very difficult to discover much about the specific background and performance characteristics of the students involved. 41% of the students in magnet programs are located in their own neighborhood high school. Moreover, newer programs have had the fewest transfers – statistics that may reflect weak recruitment or transportation systems. In any event, some programs have little magnetism for students from other neighborhoods.

The school district's survey of students in 1987, however, showed that most students were extremely positive about their experiences. Both the magnet and non-magnet students were almost unanimous in believing that elementary school children needed more information about magnet choices before high school.

78% of magnet students and 67% of students not in the program agreed that 'having the magnet program at this school improves the school for all students'. Two-thirds of magnet students thought that the program had increased their 'career opportunities'. 93% of the magnet students said that they had enjoyed the programs, 91% saw them as a 'major advantage', and three-fourths (77%) said they had increased chances of going to college (Atlanta Public Schools, Rept. No. 5, Vol. 22, 1988).

The science and math magnet program may have strongly influenced both the socio-economic composition and the academic achievement level of Mays High School, which stands apart from other city high schools. Research elsewhere has shown that magnet programs often increase race and class distinctions within school districts, particularly when they are connected to screening procedures and lack both free transportation to encourage transfers by low-income students and good information-disbursement systems. In such circumstances they tend to increase the choices of the groups with the most education and the highest incomes in the school district.

Some of the class biasing tendencies of magnet programs can be controlled through strong policies making information more widely available, prohibiting rigid screening, and assuring participants of free transportation. At the same time, magnet programs can hold middle class children in public schools who would otherwise leave the system and, perhaps, the city. Magnet programs can offer islands of competitive, grade-level, college prep education in a system which is unable to offer it in most schools.

These programs require difficult trade-offs but they need to be discussed. Perhaps Atlanta and the integrated suburbs should consider entire school magnet programs funded with the support of the state government to serve the entire Atlanta metropolitan area. Certainly the evidence in this chapter on the lack of equal opportunity for students in black high schools justifies exploring every possibility for increasing their access to competitive schooling.

Conclusion

Atlanta's public high schools improved in several of the categories considered by this study between the early 1970s and early 1980s. The strong basic skills and community organization effort may be credited for the rise in elementary scores and the substantial decline in drop-outs until the recent past. Yet tremendous gaps remain between suburban and city, and between black and white schools. In some ways, the gaps are widening in the mid-1980s.

The most positive development, notable in contrast with the trend in most other major metropolitan areas, is the large improvement in attrition rates, especially in the predominately black city schools (though these rates began to creep back up in the mid-eighties). Attrition rates for schools with large black populations, especially integrated high schools, also are improving relative to white schools, though they still lag behind them. Also encouraging are the increased racial diversity in suburban schools, and improved test scores and attendance records at some black high schools.

While black and poor schools show some signs of catching up to their richer and whiter counterparts, class and race remain the decisive determinants of school conditions for the region. Though geographically close to wealthy white schools, Atlanta's poor segregated black high schools are worlds apart. Despite some improvement, poor black high schools have abysmal test scores, worse than many of the rural systems, and very high failure rates on mandatory state tests. Their drop-out rates are the highest in the region and their students attend school less regularly than do other students. These failures persist despite the fact that Atlanta city schools are among the best funded schools in the metropolitan area and the school district has been under the management of determined black leaders with national reputations for commitment to basic skills instruction for a generation.

Even in this bleak situation, however, some individual schools have emerged as bright spots. Several integrated middle-class suburban high schools are proving that schools with large black enrollments can perform as well or better than their overwhelmingly white counterparts. And Mays High School has shown that a virtually all-black inner-city magnet school can perform comparably to suburban schools, partly by attracting a student body with a much smaller share of low income students. These schools represent what is perhaps the most encouraging trend in the region: that at least a few schools with large black enrollments are providing their students with educations above the average for the area. Unfortunately these schools are rare exceptions. More such opportunities are badly needed.

The underlying economic and racial stratification of the Atlanta region is reflected in its schools with disturbing clarity. There is no evidence that today's schools have the capacity to provide genuinely equal opportunities for young people trying to prepare for work or for college. It is probably wrong to expect that schools, by themselves, can remedy the deepening racial separation and inequality written into the housing and job markets of the region. It was certainly wrong to think that this could be done within educational systems accepting racial and economic separation as a starting point for program development. In the early 1960s Atlanta enjoyed the delusion that segregated schools had achieved racial and economic parity. This study shows that much more is needed if the old system of unequal education, stratified by race and income, is to be changed in any significant way.

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The politics of school restructuring

Thomas B. Timar
University of California at Riverside

A current of the educational reform movement that is attracting increased policy attention is school 'restructuring'. Theodore Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools and the 'Carnegie Plan', which began as a loose confederation of schools, are moving onto legislative policy agendas. Various states, including Massachusetts, Arkansas, and Washington, as well as school districts such as Dade County, Florida, Rochester, New York, and Santa Fe, New Mexico, have adopted some form of school restructuring as major components of reform. On a national level, the Education Commission of the States, the National Governors' Association, the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association are promoting some form of school restructuring among their members. The number of states and districts adopting policies to promote restructuring efforts is increasing. Sizer's Coalition currently includes 56 schools.

While a number of educational policy analysts and researchers have endorsed, and some local, state and national policy makers have embraced the concept of school restructuring, there is little empirical evidence regarding the success of this strategy as an avenue to school improvement. Though the logic of restructuring as a reform strategy appeals to commonsense, and its advocates are persuasive, there is little agreement regarding the meaning of restructuring or its organizational manifestation. An *Education Week* article entitled 'The Restructuring Puzzle' points to the elusiveness of the Concept. According to Michael Kirst (1984), 'Restructuring is a word that means everything and nothing simultaneously . . . It is in the eye of the beholder.' Similarly, John Goodlad (1984) suggests that 'We are rapidly moving toward the use of the word "restructuring" whenever we talk about school reform at all . . . This is becoming another catchword when the truth of the matter is that hardly any schools are restructured' (Olsen 1988). The concept of restructuring raises several questions. What do restructured schools look like? Do they differ from other schools in practices, programs, or both?

Bureaucratic decentralization, which is at the heart of restructuring – whether in the form of school site management, 'choice', or some variation on privatization – swims against a thirty-year current of educational policy reform that relied on centralization and regulation to achieve specific policy goals. Indeed, many state level school reform strategies adopted since 1983 perpetuate and elaborate the regulatory orientation to school improvement. Teacher and student testing; adoption of state-wide curriculum standards and state-mandated homework, class size, and teacher salary policies are among the most obvious efforts to tighten the reins of local decision makers. Consequently, understanding where the Sizer Coalition and kindred efforts fit into this policy stream is an important issue for school reformers.

This paper assesses the school restructuring movement, and within it the Coalition of Essential Schools, its surrounding policy environment and the politics of American education. The paper consists of three parts: the first, a conceptual framework for

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understanding the organizational manifestations of restructuring; the second, findings from case studies of implementation in three school districts; the third, an interpretation which sets these restructuring reforms in the context of existing literature on public policy and the politics of education. The case study districts are in Kentucky, Florida, and Washington. The schools in Washington and Kentucky belonged to the Coalition of Essential Schools, while the schools in Florida did not. Schools outside of the Coalition were selected in order to get a broader range of implementation responses. Through such comparisons, the role of the Coalition in initiating and fostering reform efforts can be put into perspective.

This paper is not intended to be an exhaustive study of school restructuring. Rather, it offers a preliminary analysis of a dimension of the school reform movement that is gaining wider acceptance and popularity. Rather than a global description of restructuring efforts, I want to provide a contextual framework for interpreting variation in school responses to restructuring strategies, identifying the causes of that variation, and analyzing the effects of different response patterns on school organizations.

Reform and restructuring

As a school reform strategy, restructuring has its roots in various sources. In large measure, it repudiates central elements in the reform movement of the early 1980s. Without challenging the importance of recent state-initiated reforms, restructuring advocates have reacted to the heavy hand used to effect them. The unprecedented flood of state policies that swept schools in the 1980s aimed at changing them through mandates and regulations (Timar and Kirp 1988a, 1988b). Critics of these state reform efforts argue that schools as institutions, not students, teachers or curricula must be the target of reform. Tightening curriculum standards, changing teacher certification requirements, or extending the school year, for example, will have negligible effects if schools lack the organizational will and competence to implement them. Furthermore, piecemeal reform policies do not necessarily change the fundamental relationship between teaching and learning. Fundamentally, the critics insist, high quality education is the product of *robust organizational cultures*, not disparate programs. Instead of improving them, state reform strategies relying on regulations and mandates for new programs tended to overwhelm schools with additional baggage or mire them in a regulatory swamp (Timar and Kirp 1988b). Historians, like Diane Ravitch, argue that school reform trends and policies of the 1960s and 1970s had – in spite of their social necessity – seriously undermined the institutional competence of schools (Ravitch 1985). Others suggested that schools would absorb the most recent policy deluge, as they have earlier ones, without significant improvement in educational quality (Powell *et al.* 1985).[1]

A further impediment to centralized school reform is the fact that state-level policy-makers have a limited repertoire of policy options from which to draw. They can manage macro-policy – funding, teacher certification, textbook adoption, curriculum standards and equity and the like – but have limited control over daily school operations. State policy cannot change what it cannot control. The fact that the most significant locus of educational interaction – student/teacher nexus – is largely embedded within the interstices of institutional life poses a fundamental dilemma for state-level policy makers.

Criticism of the first wave of state reform drew its power from the Effective Schools literature (Goodlad 1984) and from several critical works on the American High School (Sizer 1984, Powell *et al.* 1985). These lines of research were largely ignored by policy-makers in their initial haste to reform schools.[2] Effective schools studies underscored the

importance of organizational culture and its attendant manifestations. Teacher collegiality, shared decision-making, common goals and clear priorities were essential to forging the disparate experiences and expectations of teachers, administrators, students and parents into coherent organizational cultures. Broader high school studies, e.g., *A Place Called School* (Goodlad 1984), *Horace's Compromise* (Sizer 1984) and *The Shopping Mall High School* (Powell *et al.* 1985), pointed to normative models for school improvement. But they also showed how far short most schools fell of those models. Reality consisted of schools that were characterized by a rampant lack of direction; intellectual incoherence, blandness and sterility; diffuse authority and accountability; and bureaucratic calcification. Even in schools that appeared to work well, a complex set of treaties between teachers and students tend to circumvent intellectual give-and-take and replace genuine efforts to shape the minds and souls of students.

Nationally, various reform reports, including *A Nation Prepared* from the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986), *Time for Results* from the National Governors' Association (1986), and *Investing in Our Children* from the Committee for Economic Development (1985), called for fundamental changes in school structure and organization. The Carnegie Forum responded to the perceived need to attract and retain highly qualified individuals to the teaching profession by encouraging schools to develop innovative organization and management systems aimed at giving teachers greater control over their work environments. The Carnegie Forum underscores the need for restructuring by calling for management systems that provide autonomy and discretion at the school site level and encourage innovative organizational strategies to enhance student learning. Finally, calls for restructuring come from the private sector, and most prominently from David T. Kearns, chairman and chief executive officer of Xerox Corporation, and Dennis Doyle.[3] Kearns argues that 'If we do not restructure our schools, America will be out of business by the year 2000' (Olson 1988). Just as Xerox had to restructure itself to be internationally competitive, so must schools. As examples of the system's failures, he cites high drop-out rates and the lack of habits of mind among high school graduates to become productive workers.

It is important to note that while restructuring is a commonly proposed strategy to fix what ails the schools, intentions differ. Kearns' notion of restructuring is anchored in organizational efficiency. The Carnegie Forum and Albert Shanker regard restructuring as the means to empower teachers and thereby improving school effectiveness. Sizer aims to change the fundamental interaction between teacher and child not only in terms of how teaching occurs, but also in terms of what is taught, changing the whole character and mission of the schools. At the heart of Sizer's call for change is the need to examine the cultural norms and ideas that inform school structure. Structural changes are secondary to the ideas that inform them. With the exception of Goodlad and Sizer, restructuralists have not seriously challenged the myth and ritual of schooling – the basic assumptions of what Mary Metz has called the 'real school' (see chapter 5 of this volume).

The institutional culture of schools and restructuring

The Coalition of Essential Schools is anchored in a set of common principles that aim to reverse the bureaucratic engine responsible for the incoherence and organizational rigidity of public schools. The Coalition's principles focus attention on some common features of schooling: the school's purpose is to help students use their minds well; learning should focus on student mastery of a limited number of skills and areas of knowledge; the academic

and social goals of the school should apply to all students; teaching and learning should be personalized; the student is a worker and the teacher is a coach; diplomas should be awarded on the basis of demonstrated competence, not seat time; the school's norms should emphasize trust, decency, and unanxious expectation; faculties should view themselves as generalists, not specialists; and the budget should permit pupil-teacher ratios of no more than 1:80, while allowing staff salaries to become competitive and total school expenditures not to increase by more than 10% (Houston 1988).

Other school reformers, like Goodlad, advocate restructuring as a way of improving working conditions for teachers by encouraging greater professional discretion, providing teachers with opportunities to define and administer school policy through school site management – the devolution of greater authority over curriculum, instructional strategies, and resource allocation to the school level (Hawley 1988). Advocates of restructuring argue that real change in the organization of schools cannot occur, however, without fundamental changes in the culture of schools which defines their ideas, commitments, social order and determines their rules and standard operating procedures (Hawley 1988, Metz 1988). On a fundamental level, institutional culture prescribes rules of behaviour which define both the roles of individuals and their interactions (Raywid 1988). As one observer notes:

> Within most contemporary schools, this most fundamental belief system appears to include a commitment to bureaucracy as the only plausible, viable form of social organization. At levels too fundamental to be challenged, many of those in schools have accepted that there must be differential status and authority assignments, fixed roles, clearly divided responsibilities and accountability measures, and written rules governing interactions . . . Such understandings, and the interaction patterns they produce, yield a school's social order. This 'order' determines the way in which its constituents 'do' school, and this, in turn, generates the school's climate.[4]

One useful conceptual framework for understanding the bureaucratic organization of schools is Aaron Wildavsky and Mary Douglas' (Wildavsky 1987) models of four cultures.[5] Within that framework, contemporary schools can be described as hierarchical cultures which are 'strong groups with numerous prescriptions that vary with social roles'. The hierarchical culture of schools is clearly evident by the high degree of role differentiation and specialization within them. The duties and responsibilities of principals, assistant principals, counselors, school psychologists and teachers are functionally differentiated; and teachers, particularly in high schools, rarely have contact with one another outside of their immediate areas or departments. Students, curriculum and instruction are similarly sorted and differentiated according to bureaucratic norms, which define the school's order. Students, teachers and administrators are passive subjects whose professional judgment is often subordinated for the sake of bureaucratic convenience.

Clearly, bureaucratic cultures are organizationally incompatible with schools based on the Coalition principles which subordinate bureaucratic norms to organizational competence. The institutional culture consonant with the goals of the Coalition is Wildavsky's competitive-individualist model. The social ideal of individualistic cultures is described as 'self-regulation'. Such cultures 'favor bidding and bargaining to reduce the need for authority'. The long term effect of such a culture is to build into the organization a dynamic of change – the expectation that the organization will modify itself to respond flexibly to new problems and new demands. For schools, this means that organizational needs are subordinate to the intellectual and spiritual development of students. It is based upon a system of institutional ordering that places its own competence as its highest priority.

By contrast, hierarchical cultures measure themselves by activities and focus on service delivery. Such cultures measure their success quantitatively. For schools, such measures include the number of hours spent in class, the number of credits completed, and the like.

Furthermore, considerable organizational energy is spent on the care and feeding of status and role differentiation. Teachers, administrators, counselors, and coaches, for example, spend a good deal of time protecting their turf. Departments within schools similarly guard against encroachment on their areas of expertise.

An organizational metaphor of competitive-individualism is a baseball team. In order to win games and to be competitive against other teams, a team's manager puts together what he believes will be a winning combination of players; and the manager is free to substitute players throughout the game. While players are assigned functional roles, the manager is free to assign players to those roles as situations warrant. He can choose among pitchers, pinch-hitters, utility outfielders, and relief pitchers, as the need arises. During the game, players cover each other's positions as necessary. Playing (and ultimately winning and losing) is a shared responsibility. Everyone has to hit; sometimes the pitcher has to cover first base or home plate. A baseball team exemplifies a dynamic organizational culture which reconfigures itself to be competitive in new situations. Finally, whether a team has a winning or losing season does not depend upon any one player, but the team as a whole. Individual performance is important; but so is a team's 'chemistry'. The manager has much to do with that chemistry. He has to train rookies and keep veterans from becoming burned out.

In contrast to a baseball team, bureacuratic schools resemble factories.[6] As in factories, jobs are differentiated and rigidly defined. Production line workers, supervisors, quality control engineeers, and the like have separate duties and responsibilities that are clearly specified. Accountability is based on performance of the specified tasks. The person who puts wheels on cars in an automobile assembly line, for example, is not responsible for the installation of the seats. Once a person becomes a foreman, he no longer works on the production line. Once a teacher becomes a principal, she no longer teaches. The point is not to suggest that schools are strict analogues of baseball teams or factories, but to illustrate the polar extremes of two organizational models. Today's schools are more accustomed to norms that evoke factory rather than baseball images.

Creating an organizational model of competitive-individualism is complicated by the fact that schools must change not only their own micro-cultures, but also district and state policy – the macro-culture in which they are embedded. Schools are parts of complex district bureaucracies. A district's organization, like the school's, is hierarchical, with rigidly assigned roles, responsibilities, and accountability. Personnel and budgetary decisions, two critical elements of organizational autonomy, are generally made at the district level. The start and end of the school day are also decided by the district, especially when bus schedules are a factor. And, with the advent of district-wide collective bargaining, schools must live with contractual provisions entered into by district negotiators.

Local responses to restructuring

One factor inhibiting restructuring is that schools wishing to reorganize themselves have few antecedents and little experience on which to draw. While school reform has been a ubiquitous feature of schooling for the past century, little has changed. Since the advent of mass compulsory schooling neither the technology nor the core ideology of schooling has changed substantively (Powell *et al.* 1985, Hofstadter 1962, Cohen 1988).

Theoretical rationales for decentralizing authority fall into two camps. One approach, represented by the Carnegie task force, argues that attracting, holding and enlivening top

teachers means 'professionalizing' the occupation by giving authority to teachers. Prideful teachers, the argument goes, are good teachers, and a system of prideful teachers creates a profession that good people will want to join.

The second approach, typified by the Sizer Coalition, argues that the key is understanding children's needs rather than teachers' motives. Children, somewhat inconveniently, differ in myriad ways. Only by understanding the nature of each child's 'difference' can that child's teacher truly help learning. Since only the teacher knows the child, the teacher must be given the power to act on that child's behalf.

Though the approaches overlap, they differ in fundamental ways. Restructuring, for example, starts in very different places. Carnegie focuses on changing the nature of the 'contract' between school and teacher. The Coalition focuses on a pedagogical plan. They differ also in that implementation of the Carnegie approach does not necessitate redefining the school's 'mission'. The Coalition regards redefinition of the school's mission as central to its efforts.[7]

Implementation of either approach to restructuring may be framed by two dimensions of policy: programs and practices. Programs define the core tasks and shape the overall mission of the organization. Practices, by contrast, define the character of engagement and the quality of execution of the program structures. Policy-makers face a dilemma, however. Programs limit as well as define organizational ends and thus reduce flexibility and diminish qualitative engagement. Moreover, mandated changes in practice and procedure are easily turned into ritualistic exercises. Under such circumstances, fundamental organizational change does not occur. Restructuring is defined as a set of programs to be implemented, organizational change is measured by an accretion of new activities. And if restructuring is limited to the creation of new rules and procedures, the result is likely to be elaboration of rituals or replacement of one set of rituals by another. The ways that schools approach implementation of new programs or practices, therefore, define the parameters of restructuring. Consequently, it is possible to conceptualize four implementation responses. They are classified as 'integrated', 'programmatic', 'procedural', and '*pro forma*'. The categories are based on the relative emphasis schools place on developing new practices on the one hand and on the creation of new programs on the other. Examples of the former might be peer evaluation of teachers, teacher selection of teaching materials, or hiring. Examples of the latter might include an interdisciplinary grade-level program, a mentor teacher program, or some special grouping of students. The Integrated response links the two. The relationship is illustrated in figure 1.

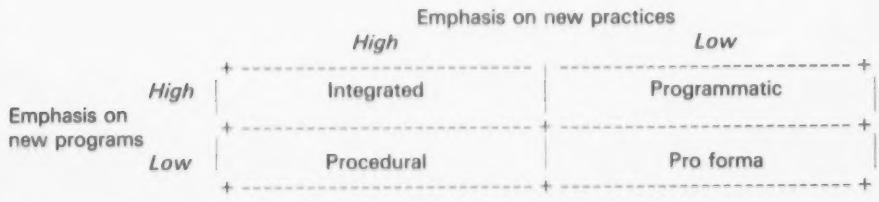

Figure 1. School responses to restructuring.

The integrated mode of implementation corresponds to the model that embraces the Sizer principles and the Effective Schools literature. Its organizational attributes are consistent with the culture of Wildavsky's competitive-individualist organizational cultures. Programs and rules serve the end of improved organizational competence. More importantly, restructuring is not a set of prescriptions or progams that compete with others, but a set of principles that lends coherence to the school's organizational structure, curriculum, pedagogy, and social relationships.

In contrast to integrated organizational cultures, predominantly programmatic or procedural implementation responses are unable to generate fundamental change because they perpetuate (and often exacerbate) existing bureaucratic cultures by separately pursuing program or procedural change without redefining the school's fundamental social relationships, rules and procedures. In programmatic and procedural schools, we would expect to find restructuring – whether motivated by Sizer's Coalition principles or some other philosophy – competing with rather than integrating and co-ordinating other reform efforts. Rather than becoming the organizing principle that anchors all other reforms in the school, restructuring efforts dominated by a singular emphasis on either programmatic or procedural changes will have insignificant or slight effects.

Pro forma implementation represents a lack of commitment to either program or practice reform. It involves nominal and superficial responses to restructuring. Such schools may claim to be engaged in restructuring, but the changes are entirely cosmetic. It corresponds to Wildavsky's fatalist cultural mode. While there are several reasons for this response, it is generally a reaction to external pressure to restructure. It may represent a range of responses from cynicism and opportunism to incompetence (Timar and Kirp 1987).

Case studies of restructuring in three districts

The different ways in which schools define and approach restructuring are illustrated by case studies of three districts. Selection of study districts was intended to provide variation not only on the basis restructured schools, but also on the basis of the policy environments in which they occur. A district in Washington was selected because two schools in the district were associated with the Coalition from its early stages. Contact with the Coalition was initiated by the schools, not the district. Additionally, Washington state had created a program – 'Schools for the Twenty-first Century' – modeled on the Carnegie plan for school restructuring, and I wanted to see what consonance existed between state and local efforts. Jefferson County in Kentucky was selected because it, too, had been an early participant in the Coalition of Essential Schools. More importantly, membership in the Coalition was initiated by the district superintendent who then attempted to implement the Coalition principles in the district's high schools. In this district, I visited three high schools, met with teachers and administrators from two others, and met with district administrators, including the superintendent. In Dade County, Florida, I visited one elementary school, a satellite elementary school, a high school, and met with district administrators, including the assistant superintendent responsible for implementing the district's school restructuring efforts.

Washington

Two of the schools in this district, one a junior high, the other a senior high, belong to the Coalition of Essential Schools. The district is a suburb of Seattle and is one of the wealthier districts in the state. Student performance on standardized tests ranks the district at the top in the state. The district consists predominantly of white collar middle-class families. While the district has become more heterogeneous with the growth of some blue-collar neighborhoods and the influx of Asian immigrants, most families are engaged in professional occupations. The PTA is strong, vocal and involved in the schools. According to one observer, 'Parents get what they want in this district.' She also explained the district superintendent's eleven-year tenure by asserting that 'Any six parents in this district can set policy.' Though the district had initiated a reform effort in the early 1980s, most observers regarded that as a district public relations effort.

A new principal was sent to the junior high school to 'clean it up'. The crisis emerged because, in spite of the district's high socio-economic status, student test scores were quite low. Drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse by students was common around the school. The school environment had deteriorated. Teachers did not appear to show much interest in improving conditions. Though the district spent $3 million for staff development in the year prior to the principal's assuming leadership of the school, not a single teacher from the school participated. Among the reasons given for replacing the principal was that he 'could not control the teachers'.

In his first year on the job, the new principal made major changes in the school. They included reassigning or removing eighteen of the school's thirty teachers. Wanting to be more a reformer and less a cop, he persuaded John Goodlad to meet with the school staff to discuss ways to improve the school's effectiveness. The school was able to make use of some funds from the district's 'Schools for the Twenty-first Century Project' to implement some of Goodlad's proposals. Soon thereafter, the principal heard about the Coalition and sought membership in it.

Though the inspiration for change came from Goodlad's analysis of the school, subsequent changes grew out of the school's association with the Coalition. In its first year, restructuring was limited to a pilot program with 90 students participating. These students participated in a common core progam for four hours daily. Curriculum and instruction in the core was interdisciplinary, consisting of language arts, math, social science, and science. One teacher assumed responsibility for each curriculum area. Teachers had complete discretion over how much time to devote to the teaching of each subject. Built into each teacher's schedule were 55 minutes of group planning time. Student participation in the program was voluntary.

In the second year of the pilot program, the core included the entire seventh grade and in the following year, the entire eighth grade. By the end of the third year, the entire school was phased into the common core.

The greatest risk to restructuring occurred in the second year when honors classes were eliminated. Historically, schools in the district had strong honors and advanced placement programs. They formed separate departments with their own department heads within schools. They were eliminated in the restructuring plan. Instead of assigning students to honors classes on the basis of test scores, students could elect to do honors work (consisting of additional assignments) within the regular curriculum. In this way, students could choose whether they wanted to opt for honors credit rather than be assigned to it. Students excluded from the honors program under the old system could now participate if they wished. Eliminating the honors track created several problems. Teachers who taught

in the honors program opposed the changes because they did not want the attendant loss of community prestige. Parents of children in the honors programs opposed it because they did not want their children in classes with the regular students, and particularly not with handicapped and learning disabled students who were included in the core. A more subtle form of opposition came from parents and teachers on the grounds that restructuring undercut the image of the 'real school'. Teachers liked the exclusivity and liked giving students 'big assignments'. Parents supported the program for similar reasons. Parents had a difficult time understanding the rationale for the changes and how their children would be better off. Restructuring did not reinforce the rituals that parents had come to associate with schooling (Metz 1988).

There were other problems too. Newly enacted state teacher certification requirements do not allow teachers to teach out of their subject areas. A social studies teacher cannot teach English or math, for example. This created difficulties in establishing a core program, since the law requires subject matter specialists in each of the areas. Since state and district policy require the teaching of specific subjects, schools must staff on that basis. Scheduling students and teachers into four-hour time blocks also posed problems. Scheduling becomes all the more complicated with the need to build in common planning periods for team teachers responsible for a core as well as elective courses. Schedules had to conform to bus and lunch schedules. Teachers included in the restructuring effort were supportive of it. They saw, as a result of restructuring, improvements in teaching, curriculum, student and teacher morale and attitudes, and demonstrated student performance. What they did not get was district, union, community or state support. There are several reasons why.

In spite of restructuring, the school remained divided between the teachers who taught in the core and those who did not, mainly those teachers who taught elective courses. Consequently, there remained a constant tension and competition between the two groups. And, as a result, the school did not represent a cohesive front to the community. The principal also experienced jealousy from administrators in other schools. They did not like the public attention that this school received, nor did they like the pressure it put on them to do something in their own schools.

In spite of problems, the principal and teachers who participated in the core regarded their efforts to restructure as a success. Much of their success is attributed to support they received from faculty and staff in the University of Washington's School of Education. Affiliation with the Coalition was equally important as it helped legitimize their efforts in the face of opposition.

The future, however, remains in doubt. Opposition to change continues from various sources – parents, teachers, students, and the district. The image of the 'real school' is a powerful one and causes resistance to change when change signals any departure from that image. There is pressure to do things in traditional ways – mostly imitations of collegiate models. Though the district superintendent and board created the 'Schools for the Twenty-first Century' program as a vehicle for schools to improve, it was a vehicle with a short range. The junior high got an additional FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) but little else changed. Fundamental bureaucratic structures remained intact. Authority and responsibility remained at the district level. Schools were encouraged to change, but only within the limits allowed by the district.

Finally, if the school is to continue with its reform efforts, it must do so with its own resources. The consensus among those participating in the school's restructuring efforts was that the district regarded it with a mixture of uneasiness and suspicion. The attention of the board and superintendent focused more on test scores than on the fine points of curriculum and pedagogy. Eventually, the school lost the additional FTE and with it the common

planning time for core teachers. The school applied to the state for funds under the state's newly launched restructuring program, but was turned down. In the words of one of the core teachers, restructuring is 'going down the tubes' due to lack of external support.

The high school that until very recently belonged to the Coalition exemplifies a *pro forma* response to restructuring. Restructuring there consisted of nothing more than the drama teacher collaborating with the wood shop teacher to build sets for drama productions. The school was nominally connected to the Coalition, and that connection terminated when the principal who created it left.

Jefferson County

Jefferson County School District is a large urban-suburban district with about 93,000 students. The district has 20 high Schools, of which five nominally belong to the Coalition of Essential Schools. The impetus for restructuring came from the district superintendent. His experience as an educator led him to believe that most school reform efforts are trendy: schools readily adopt new ideas and programs only to watch them dissipate and disappear over time. He wanted lasting reforms. His goal was to encourage teachers and administrators to think more deeply about what they were doing and why. He also wanted to create educational experiences for students that were more than passing through halls and seats for a number of years. He recognized the importance of teachers defining the workplace. He realized, of course, that these changes necessitate ways of thinking about school, new motivations for teachers, and new ways of learning for young people.

The superintendent established contact with the Coalition and encouraged implementation of the Coalition's principles in the district's schools. Shared decision-making was a main feature of reform. It was intended to promote school-based planning, teacher participation in school decision making, and collegiality – all of which would, in turn, yield programmatic innovations and, thereby, improve student achievement.

The superintendent received support for his reform efforts through establishment of the Gheens Center – a professional development center established with a foundation grant to the district. The Gheens Center provided technical and personnel support to schools.

Though all of the schools that I visited in Jefferson County belonged to the Coalition, fidelity to the Coalition principles varied as did organizational manifestations of restructuring. Without exception, the case study schools defined restructuring as the creation of new programs. The most common response was to create programs integrating several curricular areas in order to reduce subject matter fragmentation. Schools might combine, for example, science and math classes or English and history classes. Teachers with a more limited concept of restructuring, simply wanted to find better ways of teaching their subject matter. A variation of the Programmatic definition of restructuring was the creation of a writing lab or requiring writing across the curriculum. The most radical departure from the bureaucratic norm was the creation of a school-within-a-school in four high schools. In two, incoming ninth graders expected by teachers or counselors to have difficulty adjusting to high school are placed in a core program. The program consists of English, math, social studies, and science. Four teachers and 80 students participate in the program. Another of the four high schools was engaged in several restructuring efforts simultaneously. The Coalition effort, consisting of a ninth-grade interdisciplinary magnet program, competes with an advanced placement program and a magnet program aimed at other grade levels. Teachers in one program know very little about other programs beyond their mere existence. In this district as in others, teachers and administrators regard the

Coalition as a network for individuals engaged in reform efforts. Most importantly, membership legitimizes reform efforts while it provides moral support and encouragement to teachers. Teachers and administrators tend to view the coalition principles abstractly, however, more as a inchoate idea of teaching than as a structural basis for organizing a school. On the whole, teachers tend to support reform efforts. Reform presents opportunities to develop closer professional relationships with other teachers, to focus on curriculum and teaching, to expand professional roles by engaging in curriculum development, and to improve professional competence. Departments have concentrated more on essential skills by eliminating a number of electives. Generally, departments pay closer attention to planning and development of core curricula. At the same time, teachers sense the limitations of their efforts. Some teachers express frustration at not being able to go beyond the fragmented, project-oriented approach to restructuring and seek deeper, organizationally more integrated reforms. Other teachers have a more limited vision of school restructuring. They want more release time from classes and more opportunities for sabbatical leaves.

While some schools in Jefferson County have taken advantage of reform opportunities, several sources of constraint are evident. Teacher evaluation procedures and standards, measures of student progress, the structure and sequence of curriculum and instruction are embedded in policy that is beyond school or district jurisdiction. Teacher evaluation criteria, for example, are state-mandated in Kentucky. Hence, evaluation is disconnected from school goals as evaluation criteria are based on state-developed standards. Student evaluation, which also has an impact on instruction, is being changed. The state recently adopted the California Test of Basic Skills to evaluate student and school performance. The test is nationally-normed, and is not tied to the curriculum elements that the state requires. Consequently, school curriculum standards are state mandated while measurement is nationally normed. According to one observer, this discontinuity in assessment has political origins. Kentucky's politicians want to show that their schools are competitive with those in other states and have pressed for nationally-normed tests. State accreditation is another source of pressure enforcing standardization in the schools. Accreditation is based on compliance with state regulations and requirements. Standards usually measure quantifiable criteria like the length of time students are in class, numbers of library books, and the like. In addition to limitations imposed by state accreditation standards, local flexibility over resource allocation is constrained by state requirements. The number of counselors in a school, for example, is mandated by the state. The school or district has little choice but to comply. Not only is the state perceived to operate within a rigid regulatory and compliance framework; in some instances state and district efforts also go in opposite directions. While the local university and district are developing a new humanities curriculum, the state wants to withdraw certification for the humanities credential.

Innovation and change often have to work around the bureaucratic rigidity of the district. One of the coalition schools lost its core English, science, and math program because of a decline in enrollment in the school and the subsequent loss of the English teacher. Because of the district's rigid staffing formula, the entire program had to be eliminated since the English teacher could not be replaced. Staffing changes are generally complicated by rigid seniority rights. Filling teacher vacancies cannot be based on competence or suitability, but on seniority.

The greatest barrier to restructuring efforts has been the inability of the entire faculty to forge a sense of common purpose regarding the goals or substance of restructuring. In schools where some form of restructuring has occurred, it was generally initiated and

sustained by a handful of teachers, opposed by some and ignored by others. According to one observer, restructuring continues to suffer from a 'we' and 'they' mentality of teachers versus management, and students versus both. One high school, for example, developed a proposal to significantly change the school's organization. Teachers proposed an academic senate as the school's decision-making body. Membership was to include teachers, counselors and administrators. The school's principal mistrusted the motives of those behind the restructuring plan, and he consequently vetoed it, though the plan was consistent with district policy and goals. As a result, some teachers felt demoralized and manipulated by the district. They regard the district's intentions as symbolic rather than substantive.

The adversarial spirit permeating the social fabric of schools in the district has been kept alive by the teacher union's lukewarm to active opposition to restructuring efforts. Teachers whom I interviewed regard the union as part of the district bureaucracy. The union's job was to protect the contract. The fact that the union had struck the district in the early 1980s, caused the union to cling to the role with greater tenacity than it might have otherwise. Teachers have no expectation that the union would have anything to do with profesional development or staff improvement. The role of the union is seen as protecting the interests and rights of teachers, not as an advocate for change.

The tug-of-war among school administrators, union officials, and teachers is essentially a battle for control over the direction of change. Reform was in the air and seemed inevitable. The district superintendent pushed hard for reform; making it impolitic to oppose reform outright. Yet there was no urgency either to embrace it with open arms. The union's opposition led to its endorsement of a procedural definition of restructuring. By entangling reform efforts in endless rules and procedural details, the union hopes to control the restructuring process. Union control is motivated by a fear many decisions made through collective bargaining would devolve to the school level. Indeed, one school proposed establishment of a school site council which would have assumed responsibility for decisions that were subject to union control. Leaders in the dominant NEA union organization also opposed restructuring because it is too closely allied with the rival American Federation of Teachers. Albert Shanker's support for restructuring in speeches around the country encourages non-AFT unions to see it as a political rivalry issue.

Restructuring in Jefferson County schools illustrates a combination of programmatic, procedural, and *pro forma* responses. In a few schools, restructuring promotes curricular and pedagogical changes. It enables teachers to work in groups and, thereby, establish some common teaching strategies and student outcomes. The restructuring efforts tend to be regarded as projects, however, often competing with other reform projects. They also tend to be idiosyncratic because their existence depends upon a small group of teachers who take responsibility for them. Hence, restructuring is identified with a group of teachers – it is 'their' program – and has little to do with the rest of the school.[8] The program's future depends upon the continued support from a narrow group of teachers. Under these circumstances, restructuring does not alter existing organizational structures and relationships. The changes are only in the margins and can easily be erased.

Procedural responses to restructuring are manifested in efforts to control bureaucratically the direction of reform. Because the union did not want to lose hard won influence over district policy, it insisted on making restructuring – particularly shared decision-making – the subject of intense bargaining. The resulting agreement, a set of rules and prescriptions about how, when and where restructuring can occur, captured the spirit of the adversarial relationship between the district and union. Hence, the restructuring agreement created another set of rules and prescriptions to follow. Procedural responses

represent efforts to control restructuring, to keep it within existing bureaucratic limits. New rules and processes are regarded as ends rather than instruments.

Pro forma responses are nominal and manipulative. The single example of this was observed in one of the high schools that created a core program for incoming ninth-grade students who were 'at risk'. The students and classes were assigned to some remote basement corner of the school. Compared to other high schools in the area, the school's climate had a distinctly custodial flavor. The combination of pressure from the district to do something in the way of restructuring and the willingness of some teachers in the school to take on a new project produced the core program. However, it was virtually invisible in the school. Participating students were stigmatized as 'dummies'. And the other teachers in the school resented the core teachers because of their small class loads, roughly 80 students per teacher.

Dade County

Dade County Public Schools is the nation's fourth largest school district. There are over 250,000 students: 43% Hispanic, 33% black, 23% non-Hispanic white, and 1% other. By the early 1990s, the district expects to enroll over 300,000 students.

School restructuring in Dade County is focused in the concept of school-based management. Its roots are traceable to a Citizen's Committee on Education appointed by Governor Askew in 1971. The Committee stated that decision-making should occur at the same level where instruction occurs. State legislation enacted those recommendations into law in the mid-1970s. The state further supported this policy direction when it passed the Management and Training Act of 1979. By enacting it, the legislature declared its intent to devolve greater managerial discretion to principals in an effort to promote school-based management. Districts were encouraged to provide training programs for prospective and current principals, and the state education agency was required to provide technical assistance to districts requesting it.

Though the Dade County school board approved numerous rules and regulations which moved more discretion in budgetary matters to the school level, it was not until 1985, in the wake of the Carnegie and other major reports calling for school reform, that a committee was formed to implement School-Based Management/Shared Decision-Making (SBM/SDM) in Dade County.[9]

'Professionalization of Teaching', the conceptual umbrella for the reform effort became the major focus of collective bargaining between the union and district in 1988.

It is important to note that the restructuring provisions in the contract were not adversarial issues. This aspect of the Dade County experience contrasts sharply with the Jefferson County restructuring effort. The district and union agreed on the process and substance of reforms and incorporated these into the collective bargaining agreement. Restructuring was not something that one side wanted and the other resisted, hence it could not be held hostage as a trading chip. Restructuring was neither adversarial nor contentious. Several factors may explain the absence of contentiousness. The union, an AFT affiliate, is not looking over its shoulder in fear of decertification. Moreover, the union's national president, Albert Shanker, has been a consistent supporter of teacher professionalization and school site management. Perhaps, most importantly, the current district superintendent was formerly a union steward who retained strong contacts with the union as an administrator.

The goal of restructuring school management was decentralization. To develop and

implement specific strategies, the district and union created the Professionalization of Teaching Task Force. The task force was co-chaired by the district superintendent and the head of the teachers' union. The resulting proposal recommended changes in school and district operations. At the school level, the task force recommended implementation of the school-based management plan. Its broad goals were to improve educational programs for students, increase shared decision-making and accountability at the school level, provide flexibility and responsibility for budget development and management at the school level, increase collegial participation in planning, implementation, and evaluation of curriculum, encourage flexible scheduling and staffing in schools, and encourage community participation in decision making.

Thirty-two schools were selected on the basis of proposals they had submitted to participate in the decentralization pilot project. In the selected schools, restructuring was comprehensive. The entire school was the focus of reform. The district bureaucracy was altered to support school restructuring efforts. The district developed a computerized budget system for the pilot schools. This allowed schools to develop their own budgets using a dollar rather than unit-based system. Schools were given discretion over 80 to 90% of their budgets. The district created the Division of Accountability to oversee and support implementation of the pilot programs. Middle management in the district was greatly reduced. Principals now report directly to the deputy superintendent. Furthermore, principals have direct contact with line managers in other departments. A principal now may request maintenance work directly from the maintenance department, for example, instead of going through several layers of district bureaucracy. The district also held training conferences on school-based management for principals and teachers.

The high school which I visited was in its second year of implementation of the school site management program. The major dimension of restructuring was changing the school's decision making process. The plan's architects believed that broader school involvement in decision making would translate into better education for students. The school's decision-making body consists of a 32-member cadre, the Shared Decision Making Council. The council has a co-ordinating committee comprised of nine members. The Council's membership includes the principal, union steward, department chairs, faculty-elected representatives, a student, a parent group representative, and representatives from the school service areas. Teachers at the school were provided two days of training in leadership skills, negotiating, conflict resolution and problem solving.

In creating a new management structure, the teachers and the school's principal endeavored to foster broad participation. They were quite conscious about not wanting to create new programs or projects for the school. The goal was to create a new management structure which then could identify problems and develop strategies for solving them. The first priority of reform was creating a new system and procedures for decision making. The consensus within the school was that teachers needed to have greater authority to determine how students are taught. It is interesting that at the district level restructuring was philosophically anchored in the 'teacher professionalization' approach, while at the school level restructuring manifested the Coalition principles.

Major decisions regarding the school that had previously been made by the principal or the district devolved to the council. Under the prior system, the district allocated resources to the schools. Schools were assigned staff members based on enrollments and class size ratios fixed by the union contract. Under the current system, there is greater flexibility. For example, the council is allocated roughly $90,000 in discretionary funds. Last year, the council increased the amount to $125,000 by increasing the school's average class size by one student rather than hire an additional teacher. Teachers wanted to use the extra $35,000 for equipment.

The most important changes made by the council involve re-definition of roles and social arrangements in the school. Parents, for example, who serve on the council have a direct voice regarding allocation of resources in the school. This is a significant departure from the usual role allocated to parents. All staff have ready access to the decision-making process. The principal serves on the committee and has one vote. His responsibility is to act as liaison to the district and to implement the council's decisions. Teachers in the case study schools thought of the principal as more of a coach than a foreman. The principal was part of the management team. If he left, the council would be responsible for selecting his replacement. This is an important departure from the usual practice where a principal is selected by the district, perhaps with some 'input' from the school's staff, and then is expected to place her imprimatur on the school. The process assumes that schools can be shaped and molded to suit the new principal's management style.[10] The council would select a principal on the basis of her capacity to carry out the school's mission. Most importantly, the role of the principal, as well as other council members, would focus on the integrity of the school as an institution. Redefining institutional roles was not an infinite regress into bureaucratic role specification. Nor was it an exercise in redefining turf, as in Jefferson County.

Restructuring in the elementary school which I visited was similar to that in the high school. In this school, too, teachers, counselors, parents, and administrators comprised the school's decision-making body. As in the high school, the site council could exercise considerable discretion over resource allocation and curriculum design. More importantly, the hiring and firing of teachers has shifted substantially toward the council. As teacher evaluation shifts to department chairs and peers, staffing decisions are greatly influenced. Whether the council will assume formal authority for hiring and firing is an open question.

The two schools in Dade County tend toward the integrated response to restructuring. The purpose of restructuring is not to define new procedures which often become zero-sum games, but to create a decision-making structure that is tied to improving school performance. Whether that connection produces needed instructional reforms remains unclear. Modeling decision-making after university academic senates certainly enhances faculty authority. However, it is uncertain whether faculty senate-type decisions represent the interests of students or faculty. At the very least, restructuring in Dade County is not about implementing new projects in a school, as beneficial as they may be. Restructuring is instrumental, it is the means to improve organizational competence. It is the transformation of a bureaucratic, hierarchical culture that strives to maintain strict role differentiation into a competitive-individualist culture that seeks to minimize it.

A critical dimension of reform in Dade County is the strong support of the district and union. Providing support to the pilot project schools animated both district and union behavior. Schools participating in the project requested over 100 waivers from the union contract, board rules and regulations, and state rules and regulations. All the requested waivers were granted. If statutory changes were needed, the union and school district were willing to press for whatever legislative enactment was required. The unanswered question is whether restructuring will eventually create a system that sharply lessens the need for a blizzard of waivers.

Teachers in both schools support restructuring. The decision making structure encourages participatory planning. Through the council, everyone in the school became aware of the school's overall program. Teachers in English and foreign languages, for example, know what goes on in the science and art departments. There is also greater co-operation. Departments are willing to defer their own budget requests to meet the needs of their departments. Some teachers were willing to pool $50 discretionary budget allowances

with other teachers or turn it over entirely to another teacher in the interest of the school.

The principal also feels less isolated. When district union representatives threatened to file an unfair labor practices complaint against the school for changing the department chair selection process without obtaining the necessary waivers, neither blame nor responsibility for resolution fell on the principal. It was the collective responsibility of the entire decision-making council. In the principal's opinion, the adversarial relationship between teachers and administrators had all but disappeared. The principal also appreciates the presence of parents on the school site council. Since parents participate in the school's decision, he no longer has to arbitrate between the school and the community. The immediacy of the school's connection to the community is reinforced, also, in the way that parents' complaints are handled. Under the old system, parent complaints worked their way through the district, and it was finally the district's responsibility to resolve them. The current system requires resolution to occur at the school level, through the council.

Both school staffs view restructuring efforts as evolutionary, a necessary condition for more significant changes. They regard the new decision making process as prerequisite to assessment of the schools' curricula and technology of instruction. New practices and programs cannot be developed unless there is a process for evaluating current practices and programs and the benefits of new ones. The key question is who does the evaluating. Unless the school site council has the authority and responsibility to evaluate the school within established district and state standards, a new bureaucracy comprised of inspectors will surely arise. Nor can implementation be institutionalized in the absence of school-wide consensus.

Policy implications

Assessment of restructuring efforts provides some important lessons for school reformers. Among the most important is the fact that the dynamics of restructuring are highly complex – more complex than had been supposed. Advocates of restructuring believed that fundamental changes in the way teachers, students and schools as organizations relate to one another can occur on a small scale, at the school level or as a school-within-a-school. The Jefferson County and Seattle-area school districts show how such approaches result in programmatic or procedural responses. Creating a policy climate capable of fostering the integrated response requires more than making marginal changes by adding new programs or reshuffling organizational regulations. The latter changes may actually have a negative effect on schools by embroiling them in organizational conflicts that further fragment operations and diffuse energy. The integrated response to restructuring is unlikely to occur without a basic redefinition of the roles and responsibilities for just about everyone connected with schools – teachers, administrators, professional organizations, policy-makers, parents, students, colleges, universities, and, within the latter, schools of edcuation. The criteria for redefinition are critical. Results are quite different when the springboard for redefinition is teacher 'professionalization', rather than student needs.

The risks associated with restructuring efforts are well illustrated in Jefferson County and the district in Washington. Though restructuring was supported by the district, there was little unanimity or consensus about the process or substance restructuring efforts should take. In both districts, the lack of consensus resulted in political conflicts over who would control restructuring. In Washington, the superintendent and board wanted change so long as it did not jeopardize or disturb the existing balance of political accommodation. One observer in Washington suggested that it is easier to ask the community for money for

computers than for restructuring schools. The putative benefits of computers are readily understood. It is harder to convince parents that eliminating honors programs, for example, will improve educational quality. In Jefferson County, restructuring kindled the flames of lingering conflict and mistrust between the district and the teachers' union.

The conditions that favor an integrative response to restructuring are illustrated by the Dade County schools. At the district level there is a strong commitment to devolving decision making to the school level. Both the union and the district provided schools with political and technical support. Both the district and union supported schools seeking waivers from the district's regulations or collective bargaining contract. Schools were given the flexibility to experiment with different organizational arrangements. The district's bureaucratic structure was changed to accommodate decentralized decision making.

To this point, the three case study districts study represent incremental changes toward restructuring. While incremental change may be a preferred strategy in an uncertain world, it raises important questions. Do incremental changes prompt redefinition of the 'idea' of schooling? Who, for example, makes staffing decisions? Who initiates hiring and firing? Are teachers free to choose the schools in which they want to teach? To what extent do decisions about assignment, allocation of resources and the like derive from a pedagogical plan? It is doubtful whether the case-study schools in Jackson County and Washington can give comforting answers to those questions. The two districts illustrate that people of goodwill and honest intentions are not enough to override bureaucratic rigidity, political factionalism, professional jealousy, and administrative atomization. Miami encourages more optimism but its success is not a foregone conclusion.

State politics also shape local restructuring efforts

There is increasing evidence that schools are products of state and district political cultures (Timar and Kirp 1988a, 1988b). An atomized state policy and political culture will reproduce similar policy cultures at local levels. Hence, the integrated response to restructuring at the school level is unlikely to occur in politically balkanized and programmatically fragmented districts and states. Since a school's political culture is derivative, it cannot create coherence in an environment where there is none.

In many ways, the emerging state role in education and the interest-group pluralism that characterizes educational politics play out, on a state level, last century's conflict between district consolidation and administrative autonomy through diffusion of power. In Buffalo, in the second half of the nineteenth century, for example, the mayor appointed school janitors, the superintendent teachers, the city council bought sites for new schools, while the department of public works erected them. According to David Tyack, 'Fights between school boards and city councils over appropriations and over school functions were commonplace from Providence to Los Angeles' (1974: 88).

Contemporary issues of school governance are further complicated by present patterns of control. The emergence of policy spheres and issue politics over the past 20 years signals new configurations of power and control. The delineation of control along political and jurisdictional lines is incomplete. Competing centers of power have stalemated one another. In urban districts, for example, neither the union nor the board controls schools. Instead, groups compete over issues. Unions generally want to control issues like staff development, merit pay, and career ladders. Administrators want to control finance, resource allocation, and personnel decisions. Other groups control special education issues; yet others bilingual, compensatory education, or gifted and talented. Schools, like the fragmented world of

public management in the United States generally, have become more balkanized over the past two decades. While state legislative power has grown, it has also become more widely dispersed. Interest groups, particularly single-interest groups, have proliferated while formal patterns of authority have waned. The 'iron triangles' of educational politics – schools of education, state education departments, and affiliates of the National Education Association – that prevailed until the mid-1960s have given way to more porous systems. Finding the center of control over schools in order to create a more hospitable policy environment for restructuring is like 'nailing Jello to a wall'.

Furthermore, the evidence is not systematic, the state policy trend of the early 1980s toward increased regulation and compliance does not appear to be shifting. States continue to embrace student testing, school accreditation, and teacher certification requirements in efforts to regulate and control schools. Kentucky and Washington exemplify how this trend works counter to restructuring efforts. While Florida has shown more flexibility, the burden of proof is still on the schools to show why they should be exempted from certain regulations.

This conclusion does not augur well for states that have adopted the Carnegie model (or some variation of it) to encourage school restructuring or for the Coalition of Essential Schools. As more and more decisions formerly left to local discretion become embodied in state policy, the potential for policy proliferation and fragmentation increases. With few exceptions, states have responded to political pressure by 'giving a little something to everybody'. While such a strategy may have political benefits, it is doubtful whether it can produce good policy. The same factions that contend over policies at the state level have the power to reproduce fractious conflicts at the local level. Consequently, programmatic and procedural responses to restructuring efforts are inevitable.

Conclusion

Over the past 50 years, the response of schools to external demands has been to multiply programs and regulations.[11] The absence of a broad consensus about the purpose of schooling has created a patchwork of programs to meet various, and often competing, demands. The major threat to restructuring is that it succumbs to that trend. Restructuring must fundamentally alter the way schools do business. That will not happen if it becomes another piece of baggage that schools drag around with them.

In order for restructuring to succeed as a reform strategy, it must change not only local bureaucratic structures and state policy environments, but also the nature and tone of the conversation about schooling. Teachers must be trained and socialized to assume different responsibilities. They must be skilled in organizational planning, assessment and evaluation. Consequently, teacher training institutions become participants in restructuring efforts. Dade County shows the critical role that professional organizations can play. Without their support, meaningful change is unlikely.

The metaphor of the school as a baseball team evokes an organizational ethos of community of *Gemeinschaft*. It is based on its capacity to achieve unanimity in its goals. Whether its orientation is to produce a winning season or to produce a crop of students who have mastered a set of fundamental skills, its focus of action is organizational competence. Whether restructuring, in its various manifestations, takes root as an effective reform strategy depends on the willingness and capacity of schools to reassess their mission and their strategies for carrying it out. If restructuring is limited to an accumulation of new programs and practices, reform is unlikely. Instead, restructuring will be an exercise in renegotiating existing treaties.

Notes

1. See especially the chapter entitled 'Origins' Powell *et al.* (1985).
2. The folks who wrote *A Nation at Risk* were certainly aware of the literature on effective schools. They had several sessions with John Goodlad, but chose, nonetheless, to ignore that entire body of research. Why they chose to do so is an open question. A plausible explanation inheres in the symbolic nature of *A Nation at Risk*. The complexities and ambiguities of effective schools do not make good press. Goodlad's research findings lack the media punch of 'a rising tide of mediocrity', 'unilateral disarmament', and similar rhetorical flourishes. The Commission undoubtedly understood the fact that state-level policy-makers – the principal targets of the report – generally eschew complexity and seek to reduce issues to simple, one dimensional solutions. School reform policies like longer school days and 'no pass, no play' are more easily converted into 20-second sound-bites on the news and can carry a lot of symbolic freight.
3. See also Kearns and Doyle (1988).
4. Raywid (1988: p. 12), emphasis added.
5. Aaron Wildavsky (1987: p. 6). Compare Wildavsky's models of four cultures below, figure 2 to figure 1; see also Douglas and Wildavsky (1982) and Douglas (1982).

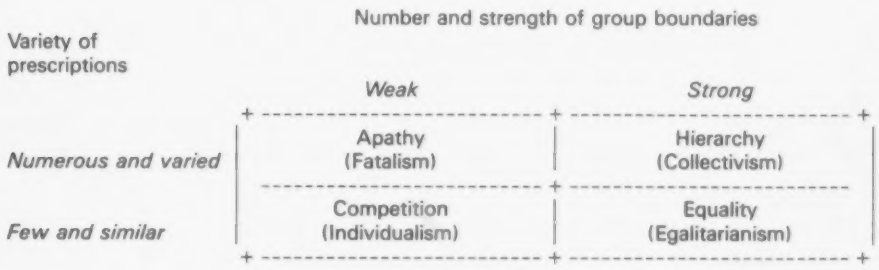

Figure 2. Models of four cultures.

6. The factory as model for school organization was more than a metaphor: see, for example, Tyack (1974: 41). He argues that educational leaders of the nineteenth century were 'fascinated with the thought of applying the factory model to the systematization of schools'.
7. For a more thorough discussion of this issue, see Raywid (1988) and Metz (1988).
8. Such reformist 'cells' may permanently destabilize the old order, though, to date, they rarely have.
9. 'School-Based Management/Shared Decision Making: 1987–88' Dade County Public School, Miami, Florida, 1985, p. vii.
10. The absence of a stable organizational identity explains the importance that most research findings attach to leadership. If the organization is fragmented, lacking a coherent focus, charismatic leadership fills a vacuum. The influence of leadership is attenuated, however, in the presence of a strong organizational identity.
11. See the chapter 'Origins' in Powell *et al.* 1985; and also Kirst (1984).

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Real School: a universal drama amid disparate experience

Mary Haywood Metz
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Variations on the phrase 'The American High School' adorn the titles of popular recent reports on reform (Boyer 1983, Cusick 1983, Powell *et al.* 1985, Sedlak *et al.* 1986, Sizer 1984), expressing a common belief that they address a single institution. American high schools are indeed alike, strikingly so in many important respects. But they are also very different in other important respects. Reformers have paid little attention to their differences; some ignore them, while others mention them almost reluctantly, hurrying on to describe what is common among schools. Still, the differences among schools are crucial to their daily practice and to their effects upon students, and so to reform. This paper addresses the interplay of similarity and difference in American high schools, regarding their similarity, rather than their difference, as problematic and in need of explanation.

The data

The chapter arises out of a study of teachers' working lives undertaken at the National Center of Effective Secondary Schools. In that study we took a close look at a set of teachers in 'ordinary' or typical high schools spread across the social class spectrum. We chose eight schools in midwestern metropolitan areas. Six were public schools and two were Catholic. Of the six public schools, two were in high, two in middle, and two in low SES areas. One of the Catholic schools served a predominantly middle class clientele and the other a predominantly working class one. We chose schools varying in social class as sites to study teachers' work because previous research in sociology and anthropology suggests that differences in the social class of communities and student bodies have serious implications for the life of schools (e.g., Anyon 1981, Bowles and Gintis 1976, Connell 1982, Heath 1983, Lubeck, 1985, Weis 1985, Wilcox 1982, Willis 1977).

We visited each school in teams, spending more than two weeks, and a total of twenty or more person days in each school.[1] At each school, we followed diverse students through a school day, spent a whole school day with each of eight teachers, and interviewed those eight teachers in depth, as well as ten others more briefly. We also perused and collected a number of documents and statistics about each school. While our fieldwork in each school was too brief to be genuinely ethnographic, the strength of the design lay in its comparative potential. We attended classes and interviewed teachers in situations that were formally parallel across the eight diverse schools. We could see their differences in clear relief.

The common script

We chose the sample of schools we did because we expected to find some important

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differences among them. Our visits to the first schools quickly gave us dramatic evidence that our expectations were correct; participation in the varied schools provided us radically different experiences. The buildings varied from resembling a college campus, at suburban Maple Heights, to resembling a fortress, at low income, urban Charles Drew. The use of time varied from intent and taut to relatively relaxed. Maple Heights allowed students to go home for lunch or to roam its spacious lawns in small groups after eating, while the two low income urban schools, Grant and Drew, kept all but the main door locked and security guards at Drew checked students' picture identifications both at the door to the school and at the entrance to the lunch room. More important, the content and tone of classroom discourse varied widely, as did the style of interactions between students and teachers.

While this variation riveted our attention as we moved from school to school, the discourse of the reform movement – which the Center hoped to address – assumes commonality, even sameness, among schools. As we puzzled over the discrepancy between our diverse experiences and the reformers' assumption that schools are standard, we came to see that we were looking at different aspects of schools' lives. The reform movement emphasizes formal structure and technical procedures in schools. In these respects, the schools we saw were indeed very alike. The meaning of that structure and technology, the cultural assumptions of participants about their activities, and the place of the school in relation to the society and to children's life trajectories differed significantly among the schools we saw.

As we watched the schools in daily action, and talked with the actors who gave them life, it seemed that the schools were following a common script. The stages were roughly similar, though the scenery varied significantly. The roles were similarly defined and the outline of the plot was supposed to be the same. But the actors took great liberties with the play. They interpreted the motivations and purposes of the characters whose roles they took with striking variation. They changed their entrances and exits. Sometimes, they left before the last act. The outlines of the plot took on changing significance with the actors' varied interpretation of their roles. Directors had limited control over their actors; only a few were able to get the the actors to perform as an ensemble that would enact the director's conception of the play. Directors often had to make the best of the qualities the actors brought to their roles and to interpret the play consistently with the players' abilities and intentions.

Just the same the script was there, and the play was in some sense recognizable as the same play in all the schools. More important, the script was extremely important to some of the actors and some of the audiences. In fact, it was where the production was hardest to co-ordinate and perhaps least easily recognizable as the same play that was being produced at schools where action meshed more smoothly, that the school staffs were the most insistent that their production followed the script for 'The American High School', varying from others only in details.

We found similarities in our schools that paralleled those recently noted by several writers (e.g., Goodlad 1984, Sizer 1984). There was little variation in school schedule and all schools had long hallways with nearly identical classrooms lined up along them. Class size and teachers' normal assignment to meet five groups of students for instruction five times a week varied little. The scope and sequence of the curriculum differed only in detail from school to school, though the number of sections available in subjects like advanced foreign language or vocational education varied significantly. Students were expected to attend all their classes promptly every day. There were extracurricular activities after school, or occasionally during the last hour of the day.

Textbooks were ubiquitous. We saw the same textbooks in use where students' scores

on standardized tests were far below average and where they were concentrated well above the median. Instruction was conducted primarily through lecture, recitation, discussion, and seatwork, with occasional use of student reports, filmstrips, movies, and videotapes.

Teachers had undifferentiated roles. Department chairs held a slight measure of authority and engaged in some co-ordinating activities. A few teachers were temporarily released from some portion of their teaching for a variety of special responsibilities, but these variations in routine were not permanent and conferred no formal special status, though they often brought informal prestige.

Despite these very strong similarities among the schools, there was variation in the appearance and style of the buildings, the strictness of enforcement of routines, and the relationships built among flesh and blood individuals on the staff and in the student body. The curriculum actually in use varied also. The content of classroom interactions, the questions asked on tests, students' written work, and the deportment of students in class varied widely from school to school even when classes used the same books.

Community and student pressures for differences among schools

Differences among the schools arose in large part from differences in the communities surrounding them. The communities we studied varied markedly in the financial resources they gave schools and in the relationship between school and community. They also varied in the resources parents brought both to their relations with the school and to the task of assisting their children with education. These communities had developed differing visions of how the high schools should be run – within the parameters set by the common script – and of the place of a high school education in their children's life trajectories. The communities affected the schools most intimately as they shaped the students who entered their doors. Students' skills, their understanding of a high school education, and their vision of its place in their overall lives differed markedly between communities. The effects of the ties between the communities and schools in our project are discussed in detail in other papers (Metz, forthcoming, Hemmings and Metz, forthcoming).

Despite different resources and quite different ideas about the nature and uses of high school education, there was no evidence that any of the communities wanted or expected schools to depart from the basic common script for 'The American High School.'[2] This support for the common script may seem 'natural', but in fact it requires explanation. Why should people with such different backgrounds and experiences and such different ambitions for their children all expect and demand 'the same' high school education for them? Why do they do so even as they also exert pressures for interpretations of that 'standard' education that produce important differences in students' actual educational experiences?

The persistance of the common script seems most problematic when one looks inside the school at teachers and students engaged in the common work demanded by the script. Except at the three schools with the most skilled, best-prepared students, large proportions of the students did poorly academically, including failing courses. At Drew, the school in the poorest neighborhood, the dropout rate was apparently over 50%; it approached 50% at Grant, the other school in a poor setting. Even at the two schools that had students from steadily employed blue collar and lower white collar families, the dropout rate was a worry to school officials and the failure rate substantial, though both were much lower than at the schools with students in poverty.

Furthermore, at all the schools where no more than half of the students were headed for college, students expressed alienation from the curriculum and from class and school

procedures in various subtle or blatant ways. The favored forms for expressing alienation from the schools' academic endeavors, and their severity and frequency, varied from school to school. Especially at the schools in the poor neighborhoods, students cut classes or cut school; at these schools there were chronic problems with severe tardiness. Once in class at these schools, students often carried on social conversations or read or wrote on unrelated projects, or sat limply staring, or put their heads down and slept. At the predominantly working class schools, where most students wanted to graduate but did not expect to go to college, some objected to assignments or quibbled with teachers over small issues; a few engaged in expressive interactions with peers designed for maximum disruption. In a few classes some students carried on a running guerrilla warfare, teasing and badgering teachers in various ways. Especially at one of these schools, students in the majority of classes had successfully negotiated with teachers for time in class to do 'homework' that became an open social hour. Students in tracked classes whose achievement was much higher or lower than average for their school tended to differ from their school in the direction of students in schools where their level of achievement was average.

Teachers' responses to difficulties with the common script

Teachers' work consists of transforming the minds and perhaps the characters of their students. To succeed in their work they must, at a bare minimum, win the passive acquiescence of their students. Students' active co-operation will make the task far easier and the teachers' work more effective.

Consequently, students' expressions of distance and distaste for the academic undertaking created serious distress and frustration for their teachers. A few determined and skilled individuals were able to reduce or mitigate these patterns through imagination and force of character within the parameters of the common script. Some, equally dedicated, tried hard but were unable to do so. Some teachers simply blamed the difficulty of teaching on students; they considered those they worked with intellectually or morally deficient. They wished they had students 'like the old days' or they wished they taught in their idealized conception of a 'better' school: a magnet school, a suburban school, or a school in a different kind of suburb where families cared more about education. Many teachers seemed to use such blame to protect their own imperiled sense of craft. Even among teachers who did not reject students as unworthy, the overwhelming majority did not expect to tailor the institution or the learning to the students, but assumed that they must tailor the students to the institution.

Even where there was incontrovertible evidence that students were not learning well, both students and teachers were frustrated or alienated, and there was an evident lack of connection between students and standard structures and curricula, teachers did not respond by suggesting alternative strategies that would significantly change the common script. A few teachers did speculate about one or another possible change, but they did not seem fully to appreciate the systemic alterations their suggestions might imply.

Teachers did make informal, *de facto* adjustments in the script, however. Much of the difference between the schools in daily curriculum-in-use, in the sense of time, and in relationships resulted from adjustments in the common script that students and teachers created together through informal processes. Sometimes these were conscious adjustments on teachers' part. For example, teachers at one predominantly blue collar school said repeatedly that they had 'to be realistic'. They made the subject matter simpler and more practical, without departing altogether from the formal curriculum embodied in the common script.

Sometimes adjustments were gradual and formally unrecognized. For example, at some schools, teachers (and administrators) felt forced to put up with tardiness and truancy, as long as these stayed within reasonable limits, because they were too rampant to control. Some teachers simply sought strategies that would win students' attention to the lesson for at least for part of the class hour.

In short, teachers were forced to adjust to their students, to change school practices to accommodate students' unwillingness to meet certain demands (e.g., for significant homework) or abide by certain procedures (e.g., consistent prompt appearance in class). They did in fact change the system to meet the students. But they did not, for the most part, do it in formal ways and they did not attempt to challenge the common script. For example, they did not argue for alternative pedagogical approaches, but simply 'watered down' the common curriculum or made it 'more practical' or just 'did the best I can to cover the material'. They did not alter expectations for prompt class attendance; they just started getting the major business of the class going more and more slowly.

If one looks at students' learning simply as a technical problem, it is quite remarkable to see situations where a technical process (or the social structure which frames it) is clearly not effective on a massive scale, but no one in the organization calls for developing alternative technical or structural approaches. Should a company that produced inanimate objects have such difficulties in accomplishing its desired results – if, for example, bicycle wheels produced in a factory were not straight and strong – the company would soon be out of business unless it changed its procedures.

The persistence of the common script as a reflection of societal thought and values

While it is easy to blame teachers and administrators for being myopic in the production of this state of affairs, it is a grave mistake to do so. On the contrary, school staffs stand squarely in the mainstream of American educational thought in their reluctance to consider alternatives to the common script.

The schools we saw were typical of schools described throughout the literature, in their adherence to the common script, in students' alienation and distance from it in all but schools for the able and ambitious, and in teachers' informal adjustments that accommodated students without altering the script or supporting learning (Boyer 1983, Cusick 1983, McNeil 1986, Powell *et al.* 1985, Sedlak *et al.* 1986, Sizer 1984).

There are reasons for students' resistance to school that, in part, lie beyond the schools' control. There is by now a large literature on the ways that mainstream schools require minority children to learn through cultural patterns that are initially unfamiliar and often distasteful. Insistance on these patterns not only creates cognitive problems – that many can and do overcome – but problems of identity, of choice between home and school worlds. This choice leads many minority students intentionally to distance themselves from the school (Erickson 1987, Fordham 1988).

At the high school level minorities experience a second set of problems. John Ogbu (1978, 1987) has argued that minorities do not learn well because the economic experience of the adults they see around them has taught them that credentials do not yield the rewards for minorities that they do for majority students. They perceive a 'job ceiling' that limits the rewards that can be gained from cooperation with the schools. Recently, he has noted that minority students who have just immigrated to this country often do not perceive these limitations, while for others even low end American jobs constitute improvements over their experience in their home countries. These immigrant students (Ogbu 1987) do better in school than do native minority students.

Native minority students may often resist the common script of high school because embracing it signifies betrayal of the peer group (Fordham and Ogbu 1986) and of ethnic identity, on the one hand, and promises little tangible reward, on the other. It is difficult for teachers, especially individual teachers, to break through such patterns of resistance.

Similar problems exist in the apparently increasing resistance of blue collar white students to the schools and the common script. A number of external social processes have undercut the claims to authority of the schools and their individual staff members over the last twenty years (Hurn 1985). Probably more important, as Sedlak and his colleagues (1986) argue, a high school diploma has decreasing value for young people hoping to use it as their major ticket to a place in the labor market. Children of blue collar and even lower white collar families have been watching the economic prospects of adults and older siblings in their communities contract during the last ten years. For these students, the most minimal co-operation with the school needed to obtain a diploma often seems a fair bargain for the minimal benefits bestowed by its receipt.

In short, students' alienation from schooling has significant roots outside the schools that teachers and administrators can do little about. Nonetheless, in all of our schools there were some students making a visible effort to co-operate and do well. In all there were some teachers who were quite successful in drawing large parts of their classes into the academic enterprise, at least during class time. And some schools succeeded better than others at this task, despite roughly equivalent student bodies.

Students' resistance to school, then, must be understood as the result of a mixture of influences. A very important part of that mixture lies in economic and social processes beyond the schools' control – though not beyond the reach of intentional social change. Still, school practice and the practice of individual teachers, as well as the perspectives of individual students, also have important effects.

Given the erosion of extrinsic rewards for schooling that increasing numbers of blue collar white students, as well as minority students, are experiencing, it would seem logical to try to increase the intrinsic rewards of schooling. Since teachers are most aware of the students' resistance to the common script, why are teachers not pushing for education that will use their students' interests, experiences, and intellectual strengths to draw them into the enterprise? Why do they not press for a more flexible, adaptable, and less monotonous rhythm of activity?

One important reason is that teachers work within larger organizations that mandate much of the common script in non-negotiable terms. In most of our schools teachers had curriculum guides that outlined their formal curriculum, though they might be able to make a fairly broad range of choices within a given framework. The schedule of the school day was decided by the central district administration. State laws and Carnegie units for college admissions froze the larger outlines of the formal curriculum even beyond the district level. Architecture and union contracts shaped class size. In most cases district policy determined homogeneous or heterogeneous ability grouping. In other words, teachers were hemmed in by state laws, district directives, union contracts, and college admissions pressures – as well as societal expectations – all of which presumed or required that they follow the common script.

We have, then, to look beyond individual schools or the occupations of teaching and school administration to find the most important sources for the common script. It has deep historical roots. Several historical works (e.g., Callahan 1962, Katz 1971, and Tyack 1974) have traced the development of the forms we take as 'natural' today. They stress the dominance of the factory model of organization at the time that compulsory schooling was being taken seriously, so that schools were increasing in number and public saliency, and

being given what was to become their common form. Managers and bosses expected to have almost total control over subordinates. Schools were a mechanism for quick Americanization of diverse immigrants and efficient training of a labor force, most of whom were headed for menial jobs where bosses and managers intended to be the brains while they were simply hands. Such a system was not designed to be responsive to individual or cultural diversity. If it failed to develop sophisticated literacy and numeracy in poorer children or those who were culturally different, then they simply would be channeled into work where sophisticated skills were not required or even desired. The common script is, in some ways, a historical residue.

David Cohen (1987) has recently argued that the roots of the common script are historically deeper yet; they go far into European history. He focuses on schools' attachment to teaching through a corpus of revered written works and through telling. Western society learned to revere the few surviving written works of earlier great civilizations through the years of the middle ages when a few precious copies of these works were carefully preserved and laboriously copied. Protestant attachment to the Bible furthered this attitude. At the same time, he says, folk patterns of informal teaching in everyday life consist in telling, in instruction through didactic means. When the schools resist innovations that would make children more active learners or adjust the curriculum to the child, they are only following deeply engrained cultural patterns of revering great books and of instruction by lecture.

While history may have shaped the form of the common script, it is important to seek the reasons that it is so widely embraced by contemporary actors. If the common script has not been able to produce good results with large proportions of students in recent years, it would seem reasonable to try altering the script. It requires explanation that neither teachers, nor other education professionals, nor policymakers, nor parent groups often consider such a possibility. Why, then, is the common script so persistent?

The common script as 'Real School': a reassuring ritual for participants and audience

The common script serves symbolic purposes as much or more than the technical purposes for which it was overtly designed. It does so, first, for the teachers, students, and parents in the schools, especially those where students do not achieve well, and, second, separately, for the public at large, especially for the more powerful and prosperous groups whose own children generally experience the schools as technically effective. In this section, I will show how the common script makes all schools appear 'real' to those who participate in them, even when they have great difficulty fulfilling their technical mission. In the next section, I will show how the standardization implied by all schools' adherence to a common script covers obvious inequities between schools in privileged and deprived areas and so allows us all, especially the privileged, to maintain our belief that American education offers equality of opportunity.

The symbolic importance of the common script for participants in schools where it is technically ineffective first became clear to us, as we puzzled over the apparent contradictions of life at Charles Drew High School, the one of our schools serving the most deprived and depressed area. Charles Drew's neighborhood is desperately poor and has been all black for a quarter century. The neighborhood is considered dangerous for students to move through, at least after dark, and it is full of all the classic social ills associated with urban poverty. While we were there we heard about deviance in the area – gangs, drugs, robbery, and assault – and about poverty and its associated ills – welfare, early pregnancy, house fires, and constant residential mobility.

However, Charles Drew is not a typical urban school. It has a predominanty black faculty and a completely black administrative team. It has a large stable core among both teachers and administrators. There is both respect and connection between many members of this staff and the community. Despite residential mobility, families stay within the area. One assistant principal knew large proportions of the families; he had taught many students' parents and knew or had even taught their grandparents. Teachers were expected to get to know the parents of their homeroom students and to establish a continuing relationship with them. Many teachers took this responsibility seriously and did develop collaborative relationships with these parents. Administrators and some teachers spoke of 'the community' respectfully and with some knowledge.

The school had a core of administrators and teachers who were trying hard to make Charles Drew a viable high school that would assist its students to develop a solid academic background and to move on to steady jobs or to higher education. But Charles Drew struck us as deeply contradictory. It was in many ways far more relaxed than any of our other schools, especially in the sense of time. Even though, by district decree, there were more periods in a day than in our other schools, so that each period was only forty minutes long, students trickled in through the first five to ten minutes of class. A few were up to twenty minutes late. Despite the presence of supervising teachers and security guards, there was a constant flow of traffic in the halls. Students skipped classes as well as coming late. The principal declared an amnesty day for truant students while we were visiting the school near Thanksgiving. Supposedly students who had been systematically skipping a class could return without penalty.

These patterns were adjustments the school made to its student body. With a dropout rate of around 50 %, one of the school's main problems was trying to keep students from severing ties completely. Administrators insisted that teachers accept tardy students in their classes, lest tardy students who missed class fall so far behind that they ceased to come at all. Similarly, they asked teachers to give a second chance to students who had given up on a class if they would return under the amnesty provision.

The school also adjusted to students' low skills. Nearly 60 % of the sophomores who took the Iowa Test of Achievement scored in the bottom quartile, compared to a national sample, in both reading and mathematics. This figure understates the problem, since some of the weakest students dropped out before reaching the sophomore year. Consequently, many teachers spent at least part of their time instructing students in skills and material that were far more basic than those the title of a course would suggest – although they also presented material that did indeed fit the traditional high school course labels. Teachers varied in the mix of their compromise. Most teachers seemed to present some material on the level of the course title and some that was remedial. Sometimes these adjustments consisted in class meetings that reflected titles, but written work that was simpler.

On the other hand, the formal curriculum of the school went to the other extreme. The principal had raised course requirements above district minima. Students had to take four years of English, four of mathematics, four of science and three of social studies to graduate. Furthermore, there were no easy electives to fill out these requirements. For example, students progressed from freshmen English through American literature to English literature and then to a senior class in composition and world literature. In that senior class they read, among other works, Huxley's *Brave New World* and Dante's *Inferno*. In science they moved from general science, to biology, to chemistry, to physics. As a consequence of these requirements, the school's vocational education program shriveled and nearly disappeared.

These contradictions were bridged by allowing students to progress to physics after taking, but not necessarily passing, biology and chemistry and without a requirement that

they pass geometry and advanced algebra. The physics teachers taught fundamental measurement skills, and one said that she hoped to complete mechanics with students having a solid grasp of it by the end of the year but might get no further. Teachers at other schools told me they would complete mechanics before Christmas. In senior English, we saw students practising and struggling with the elementary forms and skills of a business letter, even though they would be reading Dante's *Inferno* later.

In short, the school's life was shot through with disjunction and contradiction. A formal curriculum as demanding as that in our highest SES schools, including texts and primary readings that were just as difficult, was contradicted by student skills and written work that were infinitely weaker. In junior and senior classes serving the half of the students who would not drop out, there was also more discussion than was common in the other low and middle SES schools. Some students seemed to us to perform well, though some teachers cut off or failed to build on what we thought were perceptive comments. But students' written work did not come near to matching this oral performance. There was a similar disjunction between the formal standard requirements for use of time and space and the casual sense of time and large numbers of students moving about the school outside classrooms during class hours.

We came away from this school with a sense that the staff were putting enormous energy into creating a situation where every one could go through the actions that indicated that they were teachers and students in a real high school. It was here that we began to see the dramaturgical qualities of high school life. We felt that we were witnessing a play. The title was 'Real School'. Though there was tremendous social energy invested in the production, its contradictions gave it a fictional quality. It became clear that the participants were the audience as much as were we, or parents, or central office supervisors. There was nothing cynical about this production – though some teachers, played their parts lacksadaisically or with ironic distance.

In the stressed circumstances that this school faced, dealing with a student body most of whom did not have academic skills adequate for high school work, and most of whom were distracted by turmoil in the community and their families, it became important to create a social drama that assured all participants that they were teaching and learning in a Real School. They also needed socially viable signs that they were Real Teachers and Real Students.

It is helpful in understanding what was happening at Drew to think of Real School as a ritual, rich with symbols of participation in cultured society and in access to opportunity. Teaching Dante, Huxley and physical mechanics to every graduating senior assured both teachers and students that they were participating in a high school that was worthy of the appellation. By making sure that every graduating senior had a rigorous academic course of study on his or her transcript, Drew's administrators made a statement that Charles Drew offered as good an education as the best suburb, and that its graduates were fit to compete with graduates of such institutions. Participating in the classroom actions that were part of this ritual, discussing novels by Steinbeck or the principles of the Enlightenment, assured teachers as well as students that they were doing Real Teaching and Real Learning. Participation itself engaged them both in actions that assured them that this was really a school and that it was a Real School – thus making them Real Teachers and Real Students.

As Nancy Lesko (1986) has pointed out in discussing rituals in a Catholic school, ritual has a chance through the medium of participation, which is less linear than discourse, to heal contradiction. Charles Drew's many problems made it difficult for it to run a standard high school program without incurring a host of contradictions. By emphasizing school practices redolent with the symbolism of the best academic schooling and by instituting higher

graduation requirements than the system expected, Charles Drew set high sights for both its students and its teachers and reassured them that despite their daily struggles to teach and to have a hope that high school could benefit them as students, the school was offering as genuine an education as that in the best suburban schools. Participation in the daily rhythms of a school, even if raggedly performed, handling and discussing difficult books, even if not writing about them in complex ways, reassured teachers and students that they were keeping up and gave them feelings of participating in a common drama played out in similar classrooms throughout the metropolitan area and the country.

The lessons that were so vivid at Drew seem transferable to the less dramatic productions at the other school in a poor area and to the two schools in our sample in areas that were economically solid but predominantly blue collar. Teachers doggedly maintained the patterns of Real School despite various adjustments to deal with their students' alienation. By following through with the ritual of Real School, teachers could feel they had taught, whether or not students learned. It seemed that it was at Drew and at Ulysses S. Grant, the other low income school, that the symbols and ritual of Real School were more underscored. It was at these schools that the status of the school and its teachers and students as Real was most in doubt, and therefore needed the most reaffirmation.

At Grant the affirmation that it was a Real School took quite a different form from that at Drew, however. The mostly white faculty of Grant, who had seen the school change to a majority black school with a progressively poorer, more depressed, less skilled student body, tried to preserve their sense that they were running a Real School by 'maintaining standards'. That meant assigning some difficult work, but it especially meant giving low grades if students did not come up to teachers' ideas of a national standard of performance. The failure rate at Grant was very high. When the principal, under orders from the central office to do something about it, published a list of the average grade point given by each teacher, it was teachers with the highest, rather than the lowest, grade point averages who told us the list had led them to think they might be out of line and should adjust their grading practices. We also heard teachers criticizing and dismissing other teachers as lacking integrity because they thought those teachers gave too high grades. By demanding work from students that 'maintained standards' teachers could thus show that they, at least, were Real Teachers, even if most students were not Real Students.

Real School as a symbol of equity

The symbols and ritual of Real School are important not only for the immediate school communities, but also for a regional, state, and national audience. These audiences want to be able to assume that all schools follow a common template and can be said to be offering the same, commonly understood and commonly valued, high school education.[3] In the current rhetoric of the national reform movement and in the rhetoric of many local and regional commissions, it is axiomatic that high schools should be the same across communities. The reasons for this are so much taken for granted as to be little discussed, but preparation of a capable labor force and equity are the main reasons given where any become explicit.

In the United States we say we do not believe in passing privilege from parent to child; rather we expect individuals to earn favoured slots in society through talent and hard work. Equality of opportunity, mostly through education, is a central tenet of our social and economic system. The schools have been given the task of judging new citizens' talent and diligence. Consequently, it is important to our national sense of a social system that is fairly ordered that all children have an equal opportunity through education. If we are to say that

success in education is a fair and just criterion by which to award each child a slot in an adult occupational hierarchy based upon individual merit, then the poorest child must have access to as good an education as the richest.

How, then, to guarantee an equal education? By guaranteeing the *same* education. State legislatures and large school districts standardize in the name of equity. The reform reports, with their bland references to 'The American High School', reflect a strong public consensus on the importance of offering a standard high school experience to all American children. The common script and its enactment with symbols and rituals of Real School in all high schools gives a skeletal reality to the claim of equity through sameness.

But societal perceptions here bear some scrutiny. Just as the rituals of Real School create more social reassurance than technical substance in the daily life of some schools, so do they in the regional and national life of the society. Although the schools we studied served communities that differed widely in privilege and power, since all followed the common script they were similar in most formal respects: in social structure, in the use of time and space, in grouping of students and even in the formal curriculum. But they were very different in one formal respect. They had very different distributions of measures of student achievement. Grades, nationally standardized test scores, dropout rates, and rates of college attendance all varied significantly between schools and all were correlated with the socioeconomic status of the community.

Schools not only teach the young the content of the curriculum and some of the social graces required to be a member in good standing of a school community, they also sort young people into groups labeled as barely employable, possessing moderate skill, capable of much further development, or showing extreme promise. The public schools rank the students who emerge from their doors after thirteen years in ways which are fateful for those young people's work, their economic fortunes, and their status among other members of society.

Imagine what would happen if, with the class of 1993 that enters high school this fall, the goal that educators and reformers officially seek were actually accomplished. All students would become top performers. All of them would make perfect scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, not to mention having perfect A records throughout their schooling. Chaos would ensue. Colleges would not have room for all, but would have little ground on which to accept some and reject others. Employers looking for secretaries, retail salespersons, waiters, bus drivers, and factory workers would have jobs unfilled as every student considered such work beneath his or her accomplishments.

As long as education is used to rank young people and sort them into occupational futures that differ substantially in the money, status, power, and intrinsic rewards they can yield, good education, or students' success at education, must remain a scarce commodity. Those who do succeed have less competition for access to attractive occupations, if large numbers of others do not. Families with the resources to affect the quality of their children's education have strong motivation both to provide a superior education to their children and to keep access to such a superior education limited, so that their children will face less challenge from others.

Consequently, an unspoken principle that opposes equality of opportunity through standardization of education is also at work. The public perceives schools to be in practice very *un*equal. Middle class parents will make considerable sacrifices to locate their children in schools they perceive to be better than others. Communities of parents with the economic and political means to do so will construct schools with special resources for their own children and will keep access to them exclusive. The social class and race of peers is often used by parents as a rough indicator of school quality.

Separate suburban school districts facilitate residents' ability to create superior schools based on selected peers, generous material resources, and teaching positions that attract many applicants from which to choose. Ordinances requiring certain sizes for lots, or only single occupancy housing, can keep out lower income families. Fair Housing groups across the country document the continued practice of racial steering by real estate agents; it can be used to keep many suburban communities all or mostly white. These districts can take advantage of their higher tax base to add the amenities of higher salaries for teachers, smaller class sizes, and richer stores of materials to their 'standard' schools.

The six public schools we studied, although chosen to be ordinary and not including any really elite schools, provide eloquent testimony to the differences in public education that economic and racial housing segregation create in this country. In the communities they served, students received very different amounts of economic and educational resources from their parents and enjoyed very different levels of community safety and support. Students from different communities arrived at high school with visibly different skills, attitudes, and future plans. Different levels of funding available from local tax bases were visible in the schools' architecture, the nonteaching duties expected of their faculties, their extracurricular activities, and their supplies. Not only parents and students but school staff entertained very different visions of students' futures; these visions shaped the relationships of staff and students and the curricula-in-use (Hemmings and Metz, forthcoming; Metz, forthcoming). The differences among these schools remind us that more is hidden than revealed when one speaks in a single phrase of 'The American High School'.

Political scientist Murray Edelman (1977), argued that our political life is shot through with contradictory ideas that the public entertains simultaneously, but in alternation, so that no sense of inconsistency troubles our individual or collective consciousness. We perceive each side of the contradiction as it suits the context, or our social purposes and self-interests. In this way, Americans seem to live with a contradiction between officially equal education based on the common script for the drama of Real School, on the one hand, and tremendous variety in the quality and content of education resulting from schools' ties to socially and racially segregated communities, on the other. Middle class parents make sacrifices to buy houses where schools are supposed to be 'better' and communities strongly resist moves for school consolidation with neighboring communities, let alone proposals to desegregate schools or to introduce low income housing into suburbs. Despite continuous strenuous efforts to place children in superior schools and to preserve their exclusiveness, we rarely see, let alone openly acknowledge, the contradiction between these practices and equality of opportunity through the standardization of educational patterns.

Society's blindness to this contradiction serves the interests of the well-educated middle class. Children in schools with better prepared peers, which are attractive to better prepared teachers, have a considerable advantage in competition with the other products of America's supposedly standard and equal public schools. But middle class leaders feel no inconsistency in claiming that the young of the society are rewarded according to merit, even while they take care to place their own individual children in contexts that foster merit much more actively than those to which other children find themselves consigned.

The formal regulations and informal expectations that create the common script for high schools, and that lead school staffs to use that script to create some form of a Real School, reinforce the apparent equity of American education. The common script for a Real School thus becomes a guarantor of equity across schools. It has important symbolic value in this way to an outside audience of citizens and educational policymakers, as well as to participants. Thus not only do the staffs and parents of Drew and of Grant want to be reassured that these are Real Schools; so also do district administrators, state legislators, and leading citizens with an interest in educational equity – apparent or real.

Conclusion

The common script for high school practice with its standard social structure, technical routines, and curricular scope and sequence has taken on a deep cultural value in this country. Its enactment assures both participants and outsiders of the equity of public schooling in the nation as a whole, while it certifies teachers and students who follow it as legitimate and worthy participants in the academic and social life of the broader society. To follow the script is to accomplish these ends more clearly and surely than it is to effect students' mastery of geometry, chemistry, grammar, and clear written expression. The script serves as a symbol of unity and equity in American education. Participation in the drama it sketches out is participation in a ritual that affirms membership in mainstream American life.

The symbolic and ritual aspects of the play called 'The American High School' are most visible where its routines are least technically effective in teaching geometry, chemistry and English. We reached our insights into the symbolic and ritual aspects of the common script as we puzzled over its persistence in schools where it was manifestly not technically effective. Our conviction of the importance of symbol and ritual in maintaining Real School grew as we considered the outpouring of writing already cited which indicates that in recent years, not only in our schools for the poor and the working class, but in most American public high schools for students not headed for selective colleges, the script is no more than minimally effective while student alienation and even student failure are endemic.

This is not to say that the common script that we have developed for high school structure and instruction is irrelevant to its technical ends. It works with reasonable technical effectiveness in schools where certain unstated preconditions are met. In our study, it worked where students came to high school with strong literacy, numeracy, and writing skills and a rudimentary knowledge of history and science. Its effective operation also seemed to depend on students' having realistic hopes of at least modestly successful economic futures to give them extrinsic motivation to compete with each other and to accept the staff's agenda as worthwhile. These conditions apply to the majority of students in a decreasing number of schools, in only two of the six public schools we visited, and only three of the total eight. In our study, they applied where the majority of students expected to attend colleges with admissions standards that would eliminate some high school graduates.

Persons who are in a position to influence district, state, and national agendas for education are usually persons who were reasonably successful in learning through the patterns of Real School themselves. Most will expect it to work well for their own children, and for most it will indeed do so. These children will come to school from home prepared with relevant skills and a cultural style matched to school discourse. They will be able to expect later rewards for effort and good performance. They will be in schools with peers with similar advantages who will allow teachers to proceed with planned agendas and will stimulate one another to competition.

Many persons in policy-making positions have little direct experience from which to reflect on schooling processes and student reactions other than their own schooling and that of their children. Many have had little or no firsthand experience with schools for blue collar, let alone really poor or minority children, and little or no firsthand experience with the families or the life experience of students in such schools. If their images of what happens inside these schools are not clear and their diagnosis for the students and the schools not well-suited to the realities of their lives, no one should be surprised. Lacking this knowledge, they can easily believe that poor and minority and even blue collar children do not learn well in school because of defects in their characters that can be remedied with stronger demands and coercive pressures, with a sterner imposition of Real School. They can see differences

between schools for poor children and the schools their own children attend in terms of talent and its lack, or effort and sloth, not in terms of advantages in their children's school experience. The system seems to them to offer equality of opportunity through the common script, while dramatic differences in patterns of student accomplishment between schools can be attributed to merit and fault in the individuals who attend them.

The lack of search for alternatives to the common script is a striking feature of current high school life – though some individual teachers do have successful alternative practices in place. But the many experiments that were tried in in the 1960s and '70s, producing at least some anecdotal evidence of success, were rarely visible in the schools we studied. Some were still remembered. For example ethnic studies classes, like Afro-American history at Drew, had been discontinued within recent memory at some schools. This lack of alternatives feeds on itself, as schools that offer unconventional courses or teachers who follow unconventional practices, become increasingly exceptional.

The pressures of the reform movement on the schools we studied strengthened the grip of Real School. Rising graduation requirements, increased standardized testing, and increased monitoring of drop-out rates and grading practices pushed teachers not only to use the script, but to follow it more slavishly and improvise less than they otherwise might have.

Once in place, the comon script and the practice of Real School are reinforced by an interacting set of influences that overdetermine a conformist outcome. Broad societal support for these standardized patterns is frozen into bricks and mortar and into legal language. Thus school buildings, union contracts, and curriculum guides at the district level all support its patterns and are difficult to alter. Nationally distributed textbooks, college entrance requirements, state policies and laws, and nationally visible tests such as the ACT and college board achievement tests also play their parts.

These structural conditions and the less explicit expectations for curriculum and pedagogy that accompany them constrain teachers' practice directly but also set invisible boundaries around the content and style that teachers can easily claim to be legitimate. They significantly limit the range of teachers' ways of working. By legitimating, even certifying as required, a particular, apparently effective technical approach, they make teachers responsible both to use this approach and to make it successful. If teachers' practice is not then effective, the explanation seems evidently to lie in the actors within the school, in defects either in teachers' own performance of the script or in students' application of themselves to their parts. Teachers must blame themselves or blame the students – as will outsiders.

The institutionalization of Real School is embraced not only by powerful, well-educated families for whom it usually works well, but by powerless and minimally educated families and their children as well. Even where students are not learning well, parents can be very insistent on the importance of traditional, Real, patterns of schooling (Joffe 1977, Lubeck 1985, Ogbu 1974). Even the students who skip classes or refuse to do the written work when they come, may accept only the most traditional activities of Real School as authentic. James Herndon's (1967) description of his experience of teaching poor black children in junior high school in the late 1950s gives vivid evidence of this attitude. He describes how the children celebrated when a substitute teacher gave them grade level books, which they embraced, but never worked in. They wanted the books; so they could 'not-do' them, as Herndon says. In our terms, the books gave them symbolic status as Real Students, but were not something they wanted to involve themselves in learning.

Nonetheless, there is some technical wisdom in the reluctance of school administrators and parents alike to open the flood gates of experimentation in poor areas. Standard curricular materials cut down the amount of work that teachers must do to present students a lesson that has at least minimal substance. Experimentation with genuinely alternative

educational processes in an attempt to elicit students' intrinsic interest requires much more work from teachers. Many, perhaps most teachers, are likely to find the rewards unequal to the efforts such teaching requires. A good deal of skill and imagination is probably also required to succeed in such efforts, and not all teachers possess these requisites. Curriculum guides and texts support the efforts of the less than gifted. Poor and minority parents, who have been exposed to the low end of American schooling, are well aware of the effects of despair or malfeasance among teachers; they have experienced some of them in action despite the protections of the common script. They are probably not wrong in seeing some guarantee and insurance of education for their children in the patterns and rituals of Real School.

Alternatives to Real School exist; they have a history that extends well back into the nineteenth century (Cremin 1961). Many have met with great success in particular situations. A few, like the Montessori method for young children, have become well-codified and have gained considerable social recognition. Especially at the elementary level, but also at the high school level, similar ideas keep being reinvented by teachers or founders of schools. They fade away, only to reappear again in a new guise a few years later in another place. But few have become fully institutionalized and widely recognized. Hence, when the obvious policy question 'What method is better than Real School?' is raised, there is no systematic loyal opposition waiting to take over control, no alternative 'one best system' (Tyack 1974) standing in the wings.

A reason for the lack of codified substitute plan for schooling system lies in the emphasis of many alternative patterns upon responsiveness to students' prior experience and current interests. Such educational approaches must be relatively unstructured; they will take variable forms in varied settings. They also do not lend themselves to mass production with textbooks, standardized tests, and comparable credentials – all features that mass schooling and mass credentialing of students demand.

A concatenation of influences thus support the dominance of Real School and make its patterns extremely difficult to dislodge, even when their technical effectiveness falters and is clearly vulnerable to criticism. However ironic it may be, many dispossessed parents and students, together with their teachers, see in Real School, a chance to maintain their pride and their sense of membership in the mainstream of American education, and so in American society. At the same time, precisely because Real School is not very effective in improving learning for more than small numbers of children from poor, minority or even established blue collar families, the relatively privileged educational decisionmakers who determine its content can support offering it to all students, and even intensifying its requirements for all, without fear that they will increase competition for the children of more educationally privileged parents like themselves. Offering the same education to all appears to be the essence of fairness – unless one has a sense of the interactive processes that transform the same structures and formal procedures into the diverse daily lives of schools in differing communities.

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Notes

1. We visited the schools with two person teams for the teacher study. As principal investigator for the teacher study, I took the lead role in fieldwork at six of the eight schools. Nancy Lesko, a staff researcher at the National Center on Effective Secondary Schools, took the lead role in two of the eight schools. Graduate assistants Annette Hemmings and Alexander K. Tyree, Jr. alternated as the second team member; at two schools both were present, sharing the second role. In a co-ordinated but separate study, Richard Rossmiller and Jeffrey Jacobson worked with administrators in the same schools. I have not counted their eight days in the schools in our total.
2. Perhaps the only exception was parental support for flexible scheduling at the middle class Catholic high school. This departure from both the daily time schedule and the size of class groupings was the most significant difference in pattern at any of our schools – and could be called an actual rewriting of the script.
3. Meyer and Rowan (1978) made this point a decade ago.

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POLITICS OF EDUCATION ASSOCIATION YEARBOOK 1989, 93–106

The politics of technology utilization

Philip K. Piele
University of Oregon

> Surely some revelation is at hand;
> Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
>
> W. B. Yeats 'The Second Coming',
> *Collected Poems* (Macmillan, 1924)

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the politics of technology utilization in schools, especially as it pertains to current activities and future trends. The scope of the chapter's discussion is confined to K-12 public schools in the United States, thus excluding post-secondary institutions such as community colleges and universities, as well as technology utilization issues in other countries.

The chapter's political analysis is focused primarily on external, rather than internal, issues surrounding the utilization of technology in the schools. That is to say, while some attention to organizational (typically bureaucratic) politics of schools is unavoidable especially when discussing political issues related to the use of the microcomputer in schools, the external politics of technology utilization involving local, state, and federal levels of government will be the central focus of this chapter. Interest-group politics will also be examined, especially as practiced at the state level by professional associations representing teachers, administrators, and school board members.

The chapter first examines the failure of the microcomputer to transform the traditional role of the teacher in the schools and then assesses the promise of interactive distance learning to do so. To anticipate, the primary conclusion reached is that only technologies like interactive distance learning, with its capacity to offer an educationally viable and cost-effective alternative to the classroom teacher, will have a real impact on schools. One test of the significance of that impact is, I argue, the amount of political pressure exerted by interest groups to block such alternatives from being adopted.

Why microcomputers failed to transform the schools

Early proponents of the use of computers in the schools tended to hold to a belief in technological determinism: computers would irresistibly sweep aside or circumvent established education practices in this country. Certainly the most visible and influential of the early prophets of a microchip-induced transformation of the public schools was Seymour Papert, a professor of mathematics and education at MIT, whose book *Mindstorms*, published in 1980, became holy writ for computers in education among academics and practitioners worldwide. In summarizing his vision of student learning radically transformed by the microcomputer, Papert said:

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> I believe that the computer presence will enable us to so modify the learning environment outside the classrooms that much if not all the knowledge schools presently try to teach with such pain and expense and such limited success will be learned, as the child learns to talk, painlessly, successfully, and without organized instruction. This obviously implies that schools as we know them today will have no place in the future.
>
> (Papert 1980: 9)

Now, more than a decade after computers began to invade the schools, the evidence from respected researchers and nationally prominent advocates of school reform finds the reality of computer use in most public schools in this country to be more form than substance. Most computer applications are relegated to fairly mundane skill-building instruction like teaching keyboarding to elementary school students, the fundamentals of the computer to middle school students, and introductory programming courses in BASIC and Pascal to high school students, with a wide variety of drill and practice programs for various subjects and nearly all grade levels thrown in along the way.

'Use of computers will remain at the periphery of the institution [school] not affecting its core activities', says Dekker Walker, 'just as other forms of technology – films, video, tape records, and so forth – do today' (Walker 1986: 32). Thus, concludes Walker, 'I cannot agree with those who foresee the death of organized schooling, certainly not in this century' (p. 37).

In his influential study of the American high school, Ernest Boyer presaged Walker's findings when he found use of computers in schools to be not only 'spotty and uneven', but used 'largely by male students in mathematics classes' (Boyer 1983: 189). Unless more teachers are trained to use microcomputers in their classes, suggests Boyer, the microcomputer, like other technologies promising to revolutionize schools in the past, will bypass the schools 'because teachers have been bypassed in the process' (p. 191). One explanation for the peripheral status accorded technology in most schools is suggested by L. J. Perelman:

> The common practice of trying simply to *add-on* technology to education while actively prohibiting transformation of the rest of the system's social infrastructure is just what has made much of the technological experimentation in education fruitless.
>
> (Perelman 1987: 33)

And Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, supports Perelman's explanation. Shanker stated, 'I know of no other fields save education whose structure, technology, and basic ways of operating (and problems) have remained unchanged for over 150 years' (Shanker 1988: 29).

The politics of the early years of providing access to microcomputers in the schools centered, at the state and federal levels at least, on passing legislation making funds available to schools to buy microcomputers and related hardware. Local efforts in this arena centered on school districts scrambling to establish, equip, and staff microcomputer labs initially in the high schools and spreading down from there to as many middle schools and elementary schools as state and federal funds and local taxpayer forbearance could be stretched. The politics of the early microcomputer hardware acquisition period – roughly a five-to-six-year period beginning in the early 1980s – saw federal, state, and local educational agencies eagerly responding to the promise of a microcomputer-induced educational utopia where every child would have access to his or her own electronic tutor in a traditional learning environment more or less transformed from a bureaucratic, mass-processing, control-oriented place to an open, creative, stimulating place where teachers and computers collaborated to inspire and enrich the lives of students.

Although many teachers may have been initially threatened by the new electronic teaching machine on the block, they soon found that far from having to learn to integrate the

microcomputer into their more traditional teaching methods, they could virtually ignore the microcomputer altogether, sending their students off to microcomputer labs to be supervised by the staff's local microcomputer 'expert'. Teachers continued to teach in much the same way they had since entering the teaching profession. And certainly the vastly oversold promise that these new electronic teaching machines would revolutionize public education by rendering obsolete much of the more mundane tasks of teaching, leaving teachers to engage in more conceptual, problem-solving, and creative learning activities with their students, in all but a few rare and short-lived cases, never materialized. No need here for state teacher associations to lobby their legislators to apply state textbook selection criteria, for example, to microcomputer software, or to insist that teams of programmers creating instructional software be certified to teach in any state, let alone certified to teach in the state where the software would be used. Vast amounts of microcomputer-based software are currently being used to teach basic and advanced courses in mathematics, foreign language, English grammar, and biological and physical science courses. Do we hear or read about any efforts by states to enforce current statutes on textbooks and other curriculum materials and teacher certification to prevent this microcomputer-based instructional software from being used in the schools? No. And why not? Because its use is not seen as a realistic threat to present and future teaching positions. The current generation of microcomputer hardware and software used by the vast majority of public schools in this country is still too technologically primitive and educationally limited to provide a viable electronic alternative to the human teacher.

After all the glitz and glitter of the early frenzied years of school-based microcomputer acquisition and adoption had passed, many schools began to realize they were stuck with a lot of worn-out or obsolete hardware that was costing many times more than the original price to maintain. In the meantime, the people staffing this technology – those who had the interest and foresight to take a few computer literacy courses at the local university – settled down to the bureaucratically inspired (some would say endemically human) activity of enhancing and protecting their newly acquired turf.

The introduction of microcomputers in the school, while failing to transform them educationally, has surely added one more curricular component to an already overburdened curricular load carried by many teachers, especially those in the elementary schools, diverted physical space and resources to maintain the facade of computer-based instructional viability, and added to the district's administrative burden by creating the positions of microcomputer co-ordinator, director of instructional computing, and the like. All of this has cost additional money or diverted money from other areas of the educational enterprise. But while much money has been spent on buying microcomputer hardware and software and adding staff and administrators, not much in the way of transformation has occurred. Even so, some current proponents of the use of computer-based instruction in the schools argue for the expenditure of more money, not less; a stronger, more interventionist state and federal effort, not a weaker, laissez faire one; and a concerted effort to mobilize public support, government legislation, and corporate expertise to restructure the schools into temples of technological tutelage (see, e.g., Gillman 1989).

While the microcomputer has found a niche as a tool for use in remedial and enrichment programs in many schools, the time to rally public support, legislative action, and corporate expertise to transform the schools with the microcomputer has probably passed. Those who successfully made the early educational arguments for bringing microcomputers into the schools have not continued to make those arguments in the face of their underwhelming impact on the traditional organization, administration, and curriculum of elementary and secondary schools. So while many of the early highly visible proponents of educational

benefits of the microcomputer have had their fifteen minutes of fame (as predicted by the late pop artist Andy Warhol) and faded from the scene, many of the true believers and recently converted who remain in our schools and universities still gather at state and national meetings, write articles in state and national magazines, and try to convince state and federal educational agencies, foundations, and computer companies that the promises of the microcomputer can be kept – all that's need is better hardware, better software, and more money to buy the same. And the second coming will come.

Indeed it will, but not in the form expected. The real technologically induced transformation of the schools has already begun, not by the microcomputer, but by a technology structurally more powerful and, therefore, able to touch far more students' and teachers' lives than the microcomputer. The technical details and operation of this technology are virtually unknown to all but a small percentage of the population, but its applications are known, used and relied upon by nearly everyone: telecommunications.

The technology of interactive distance learning

For instructional purposes the foremost example of the use of telecommunications technology is what is now generically referred to as *distance learning*. Distance learning uses two-way audio (radio) instruction – for years the principal means of delivering instruction to children living in remote parts of Australia – or one-way video (television), the dominant mode of transmitting instruction and educationally relevant information to schools for over thirty years. While not free of political controversy,[1] instructional television (ITV as it is commonly referred to in education jargon) has, like other technological innovations before and since, been relegated to a narrow and educationally circumscribed place in the public schools' curriculum.

Most recently, interactive distance learning systems have started to combine one-way video with two-way audio instruction. Instruction is provided by an instructor at some remote site, frequently in another state, and transmitted, generally, via satellite to a receiving station with a satellite antenna and then by cable (sometimes by microwave ground station or telephone lines) to a televison set in a classroom where students watch the instruction, ask questions, or make comments to the instructor, by means of the two-way audio link (generally a cordless telephone). The instructor's response is seen on the screen and heard over the audio portion of the video monitor.

The equipment needed to receive satellite-transmitted voice and video signals includes a receiving antenna, a concave 'dish' approximately six feet in diameter, but larger or smaller depending on the geographic proximity to the center of the signal path (called the footprint); the closer the receiving station is to the center of the signal path the smaller the size (within certain technical limits) of the dish required. The costs of these satellite receiving antennas depend on their size and the sophistication of their onboard electronic equipment, such as automatic tracking systems, which not only allow the receiving station to stay tuned into the strongest signal, but also allow it to switch between different transmitting stations, alternate geostationary satellites, or different transmitting frequencies on a single satellite. Whereas an FCC license is required to transmit audio, video, or digital signals via satellite, none is required to receive them.

Additional equipment needed by educational users of satellite-based distance learning systems include a video monitor, a VCR to tape and store the lessons for later replay, and a microcomputer with a printer to receive, store, and print text material such as written instructions for class assignments and examinations. With the increased availability and

declining cost of fascilitate machines, several distance learning providers have begun to send text material via this electronic option.[2]

In addition to its ability to reach more students cheaply and quickly, interactive distance learning technologies are more effective than microcomputers and other recent instructional advances because they provide an unprecedented level of information density. Television quality video, while less information rich than photographs, and certainly less adequate than direct experience, has proven fully capable of generating 'true to life' experiences for children and adults. When interactive audio is combined with professional graphics and uniquely talented teaching pedagogy, the result is a reasonable substitute for the classroom performances of typical public school teachers. Research on the consequences of such substitutions is urgently needed, since ordinary citizens and education policy-makers are apt to give increasing support to rapid expansion of its use in a wide variety of school settings.

State level providers of distance learning services

Several distance learning providers employing the above telecommunications technology are currently operating in this country. The largest of these providers, TI-IN, a for-profit company operating from San Antonio, Texas, 'currently serves subscribers in 28 states and broadcasts over 140 hours per week of live, interactive high school credit courses, student enrichment viewing, staff development programs, and college credit courses' (De Freitas 1989). A sampling of TI-IN's high school credit courses planned for the 1989–90 school year includes beginning and advanced foreign language instruction in Spanish, German, French, and Japanese; mathematics instruction in elementary analysis, trigonometry, and calculus; science courses in anatomy and physiology, astronomy, marine science, computer science, physical science; and social science courses in psychology and sociology. Courses in elementary fine arts, art history, and reading improvement are also provided. These 50-minute courses are transmitted five days a week over four channels to subscribers in all four time zones.

Distance learning services are also provided by state and local educational agencies in Washington, Virginia, Missouri, and Kentucky. Several other states are planning to offer such services this year. In Oregon, for example, the 1989 session of the Legislature is considering a bill to establish Oregon Ed-Net, 'an integrated state-wide telecommunications network for purposes of providing educational programs, worker training and retraining and telecommunications system throughout the state' (Oregon Legislative Assembly 1989: 1). The legislation defines *integrated* as 'an electronic system capable of transmitting video, voice and data communications to support delivery of educational services, courses, staff development, data sharing, conferencing and meetings' (ibid.). The bill calls for the establishment of a governing board, whose nine members are appointed by the Governor to serve three-year terms without compensation. The board, in turn, is authorized to appoint a person to serve a four-year term as director and to establish *ad hoc* and standing committees to aid and advise the board on technical and other matters as it considers necessary. Initial funding of Oregon Ed-Net, requested in the amount of $8 million, would come from the Oregon Lottery Fund.

The governance structures and funding provisions of other state education agencies providing distance learning services vary from state to state. In Missouri, for example, the school boards association established an Education Satellite Network (ESN) in 1987 to provide instructional programs to elementary and secondary school students in small, rural districts in the state. By the end of 1989, Missouri hopes to have satellite transmission

receiving equipment installed in every public school in the state. Funds for the necessary equipment were raised by a legislatively imposed tax on video tape rentals. The *raison d'etre* for establishment of the ESN, according to Carter Ward, executive director of the Missouri School Boads Association (MSBA), was to address 'the discrepancy in curricular offerings' between the larger urban and suburban school districts and the smaller, rural ones throughout the state (Ward 1989: 1).

While advanced placement and remedial instruction were initially provided to schools, expanded services of the educational satellite network currently include enrichment programs, in-service education, and teleconferencing for noneducational organizations and groups. MSBA plans to offer its instructional programs to schools throughout the country by encouraging other state school boards associations to become affiliated with ESN. 'To date', states Ward, 'the Idaho School Boards Association has voted to become an affiliate of ESN' (ibid.).

In several other states, the state departments of education offer distance learning services. This is the case in Virginia, where plans call for installation of satellite downlink equipment in every public school in the state by the fall of 1989. If school districts do not have the necessary local funds to purchase the equipment, they can borrow the money from a special fund established for the purchase of satellite receiving equipment. In Kentucky, the state department of education arranged for the delivery of interactive distance learning courses with Kentucky Education Television (KET), a separate unit of state government. Although representatives of the state department of education sit on its governing board, KET apparently has considerable authority in deciding what courses will be included or excluded from its program schedule. In Washington, the service is provided by an education service district; Education Service District (ESD) 101 in Spokane offers high school and staff development courses to schools in Washington and neighboring states.

Several multistate consortiums of interactive distance learning providers, involving state and local (both for-profit and not-for-profit) education agencies, have been formed in the last two years. For example, the Satellite Educational Resources Consortium (SERC), headquartered in Columbia, South Carolina, is composed of state departments of education in 14 states and two big-city school districts (Cleveland and Detroit). The consortium provides live, interactive distance learning courses in foreign languages, mathematics, and science three days a week via satellite to schools in the states and cities that are partners in the consortium.

The federal role in distance learning

Federal funds from Star Schools – a new US Department of Education – administered program in the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) – supports SERC and three other regional distance learning programs. One of these programs is the Midlands Consortium, a five-state partnership based at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater. Composed of five universities in four states (Oklahoma, Kansas, Mississippi, and Alabama) and one school boards association in Missouri, the consortium serves schools in the five states. Another regional consortium supported by the Star Schools Program is composed of four universities in four states (Alabama, California, Illinois, and Mississippi) and a state department of education and a regional education services district in North Carolina and Texas, respectively. The consortium, co-ordinated by Texas-based TI-IN, will provide live, interactive instruction to schools in 16 states. Finally, the fourth program receiving Star Schools Program support is a multistate effort co-ordinated by the Technical Education

Research Center (TERC), a for-profit company located in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The consortium is composed of state departments of education and state broadcasting systems in 14 states in the north central, north eastern, and mid-Atlantic regions of the United States.

The legislative authorization for the Star Schools Program was sponsored by Senator Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts, allegedly at the urging of Boston University president John Silber, who wanted BU to be the major, if not sole, recipient of the $80 million initially proposed to fund the program for five years. Ironically not only was BU not a major recipient of Star Schools funding, but it received no funds at all. Proposals for funding of the initial programs were numerous, of high quality, and very competitive. Nineteen million dollars were authorized to fund the four initial multistate proposals for the use of telecommunications to deliver instruction to schools using interactive video, video tape, and computers in FY 88. Funding was reduced to $14·4 million in FY 89.

Despite this promising initial support of distance learning, the federal role in education technology is ambiguous at best. On the side of a stronger federal role is the following recommendation from a 1988 report prepared for the Subcommittee on Select Education of the Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives: 'OERI must make a *significant new investment* in researching and evaluating new technology capable of improving the quality of education at all levels' (emphasis added) (Subcommittee 1988: 14).[3] The report concludes by saying that '[t]here is a clear federal responsibility both to invest in the research and development of new technology (perhaps with the benefit of private co-operation), and to assist schools to move into a new technology era – an era which thus far we have stumbled into rather than carefully planned for' (p. 15).

Nevertheless, the future of the Star Schools Program is somewhat in doubt. OERI's proposed budget for FY 90 provides zero funding for the program. Whether money to maintain Star Schools will be provided in the Secretary's Fund for Innovation in Education is unclear. While OERI's proposed use of the Secretary's Fund includes plans to fund programs to support the use of telecommunications technology for student instruction and teacher training, no specific mention is made of the Star Schools program itself. For a detailed discussion of overall federal policy see the Clark and Astuto chapter in this volume (Chapter 2).

The future of the program may not be decided entirely within the confines of the federal bureaucracy, however. Several powerful United States senators from states with universities or state departments of education affiliated with the Star Schools regional consortiums, notably in the South, have voiced strong support for continued identification and funding of Star Schools. There is also strong support in the House of Representatives, especially now that Tom Foley from the state of Washington has been elected Speaker. Speaker Foley's congressional district includes Spokane, the location of ESD 101, one of the pioneers of live, interactive distance learning instruction described earlier. Clearly, with so many states involved as partners in the currently funded Star Schools program, and with 39 states having schools that are the beneficiaries of satellite antennas and other related equipment to receive distance learning programs, many of them live and interactive, the likelihood of Congressional intervention in the OERI decision to eliminate or restructure the Star Schools program is high.

Just how effective the joint efforts at self-interest lobbying by the members of the consortium to prevent OERI from killing the program will remain to be seen. But if the history of such efforts by federally funded, multistate education programs such as the Regional Labs, the ERIC Clearinghouses, and the National Diffusion Network is any guide, that effort will likely be successful, at least in retaining the identity of the program, if not restoring the previous year's funding level.

The specific reasons for efforts to eliminate the program are unclear, but one reason may be linked to criticism that the money for the program has been used primarily to fund the purchase of equipment, with very little of the promised instructional services. Still, even if the program is no longer funded, many schools have acquired the necessary equipment to receive live, interactive distance learning programs that would not otherwise have done so. Furthermore, many of those schools will have had at least some exposure to the use of distance learning instruction; based on this experience they will be better able to decide whether to expand their services by subscribing to instructional programs provided by one of the many active distance learning providers. Finally, many of those involved for the first time in the service-providing end of the distance learning movement will have gained valuable experience in developing and marketing programs. Thus local school district demand for more and more conveniently scheduled live, interactive programs will increase. As this happens, the number of commercial companies and individual and multistate public and nonprofit education agencies that provide these programs will also increase.

Political and legal issues concerning distance learning

A number of political and legal issues have been raised by the recent development of systems for the delivery of interactive distance learning services discussed above. These issues can be analyzed at each of the three education governance levels: federal, state and local.

Federal issues

At the federal level the critical issues are leadership and financing. As detailed in the Clark and Astuto chapter (Chapter 2), federal involvement and leadership in education were sharply curtailed during the Reagan administration. No coalition supporting federal leadership in the development of distance learning appears likely to be successful in the near future. While both national teacher organizations have expressed surprisingly strong support for the concept, neither has the political muscle to ensure success. Additionally, legislative advocates, like Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy, are predominantly liberal Democrats who face an uphill battle on nearly every policy question.

If federal leadership is problematic, federal financing prospects are truly bleak. Federal deficits continue to encounter Graham/Rudman limitations. Combined with the need to bail out the nation's savings and loan institutions and a continued demand for strong military spending, the deficits virtually ensure that expensive new domestic programs will go unsupported. In short, then, federal politics are not likely to play a major role in determining the future of distance learning technologies.

State level politics

At the state level, two political issues are likely to shape the future of distance learning. First, adoption of a distance learning approach to program content and curriculum design directly challenges many of the traditional structures and processes of state educational governance. At stake are both state sovereignty over school programs and state policies aimed at ensuring an adequate supply of certified teachers.

Curriculum control: In the area of curriculum control, for example, the Kentucky Educational Television provides distance learning instruction to schools in that state. What happens if KET decides to cancel a program that the state department of education says it will provide to schools? Who decides what subjects are going to be provided: the state department of education (the constitutionally authorized education administrative agency of the state) or a publicly funded educational television company?

State administrative agencies, traditionally responsible for developing and monitoring legislatively mandated curricula, are being circumvented by state school boards associations, state educational television agencies, and education service districts — to say nothing of the configurations involving multistate education agencies. Distance learning has fueled a propensity to leap traditional state boundaries and form collaborative relationships with other state educational organizations for the delivery of instructional services. As a result, all kinds of creative partnerships are being devised that seem to ignore issues of state sovereignty in the establishment and control of education.

State political experience with two other education policy issues – student testing and textbook selection – suggest possible models for how the curriculum control issue will be handled. With a few notable exceptions, states have adopted the view that private firms responsible for development of student testing programs have a right to exercise technical control over the preparation, scoring and interpretation of test results. State agencies typically confine themselves to choosing from among the offerings of private vendors' the test program that best fits their needs. Political battles over the test results rarely include assertions that the states have abandoned their sovereignty or abandoned their responsibilities when selecting testing programs. Exceptions to this general pattern have been experienced in New York, where the Educational Testing Service was sued for release of test content, and in California, where state leaders insisted that the State Department of Education develop test items explicitly to meet state curricular goals. If distance learning follows the testing model, states will adopt particular vendors' programs, but leave the determination of content and form to the producers.

Textbook politics involve stronger commitments to state or local control over program content. While most states leave the issue to local education agencies, the major textbook adoption states (California, Florida and Texas) have fought for substantial control in recent years. If distance learning follows the textbook model, a few states will display high profile demands for control while most will abandon the field entirely, assuming that market place choices by local districts will provide adequate quality control.

Teacher labor market politics: Another set of state level issues concerns the impact of distance learning on teacher supply and demand. Notice the arguments being advanced in support of interactive distance learning: a more equitable distribution of advanced placement, enrichment, and remedial instruction to small, rural schools. While not stated, the inference is that it is too expensive or too inefficient to hire teachers – even if available – to teach these courses to students in small geographically remote schools. But the net effect of this development – a *de facto* substitution of technology for the teacher in the classroom – goes largely unnoticed. This observation brings us to the heart of the political controversy surrounding interactive distance learning and it gives rise to the question: how are local, state, and national teacher organizations responding politically to the issue of present and future loss of teaching positions in certain fields? For the time being, the problem is masked by the short supply of qualified teachers in the most widely affected subject areas, and the fact that the available specialists are disproportionately concentrated in the wealthier medium-to-large suburban schools.

State level politics involving early efforts at intra- and inter-state delivery of live, interactive distance learning instruction can already be observed in several states. In Oregon, for example, a bill enacted during the 1989 legislative session provides a distance learning exception to the state statute and administrative rules that required any teacher hired by a district school board to hold an Oregon teaching certificate (ORS 342·505).[4] Essentially the bill modified the Oregon statute that penalizes districts hiring noncertified teachers. According to the statutory language, any person delivering instruction via distance learning will not need to hold an Oregon certificate, but will have to hold a valid teaching certificate from the state where the instruction originated.

An examination of the testimony presented on this bill before Oregon house and senate education committees provides insights into the political interests and arguments used to influence support for distance learning technologies. On the pro side were the Oregon School Boards Association and the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators, a federation of associations representing superintendents, principals, and curriculum co-ordinators in Oregon. The school board and administrator associations, joined in support of the bill by the Oregon State Department of Education, advanced three major arguments in support of the bill.

The first argument centered on the inability of many school districts, especially those in rural areas, to afford high quality, comprehensive educational programs. Because of the limited number of interested and academically qualified students, school boards in many small and rural districts cannot afford to hire teachers specifically qualified to teach certain courses. Distance learning increases the ability of these districts to provide comprehensive instructional programs, especially in the areas of foreign language, mathematics, and science. Second, even where districts can afford to hire teachers for such courses they are in very short supply – especially teachers qualified to teach high school level courses in mathematics and science. Third, the bill's supporters argued, Oregon school districts should not be restrained from access to this technologically innovative method of delivering instruction because of burdensome legal restrictions.

In addition to these three major claims, the supporters also argued that the distance learning innovation should have an opportunity to succeed or fail in Oregon schools on the basis of cost, variety, and the quality of the services provided, unencumbered by a state-imposed restriction limiting course offerings to those provided by teachers certified in Oregon.

Testifying against any exceptions to the teacher certification law were the Oregon Teachers Standards Commission (TSPC) and the Oregon Education Association (OEA). TSPC and OEA argued that teacher certification rules are designed to protect the students and the public interest; any exception to these rules would not be in the best interests of students, teachers, or the public.

The underlying arguments on both side of this issue embody concepts delineated in Anthony Downs' (1957) classic formulation of an economic self-interest theory of democracy. While Downs' theory was developed primarily as a vehicle to explain application of cost-benefit concepts to voting behavior in partisan political elections, it also provides useful insights into understanding the behavior of the interest groups providing opposing testimony on the distance learning bill. The position taken by school boards and administrators groups supporting the bill can best be explained by their interest in securing more educational 'bang for the buck' by providing many more students with access to limited, high-cost courses. While not covered within the explanatory scope of Downs' theory, support by the state department of education for a bill loosening teacher certification is probably best explained by its constitutional and statutory duty to ensure fair and equitable access to education by all Oregon students.

Opposition to the bill by the Teachers Standards and Practices Commission, an independent regulatory agency whose membership includes several representatives from the teaching profession, is easily understood. Economic self-interest is not direct, but the commission has become a strong advocate for teacher preparation and certification legislation initiated or supported by the state teachers union, a propensity among state and federal regulatory bodies.[5]

Economic self-interest can easily account for the state teacher union's opposition to the bill. Fearing the actual or potential loss of teaching positions, the Oregon Education Association, notwithstanding its publicly stated reasons for opposing the bill, clearly wanted to protect the interests of its members.

Interesting, and quite surprising from an economic perspective, is the position taken by the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association on distance learning. The heads of both national teacher unions have expressed support for the concept. It remains to be seen if the fears of state teacher unions like the OEA will lead the national association to alter its position.

Local politics

At the local level, the politics of distance learning are closely connected to issues of collective bargaining and teacher status. The advent of formal collective bargaining for teachers has institutionalized the politics of self-interest for the overwhelming majority of public school teachers. As local teacher unions focus their attention on the issue of distance learning, two scenarios appear likely. The first springs from the economic model of collective bargaining typically endorsed by statewide teacher organizations and frequently used by local bargaining units. Where this happens, teacher unions can be expected to see distance learning technologies as a threat to job security and to resist their use across the board. Optionally, local teachers might equate access to and control over the distance learning technologies as a much needed source of workload reduction and status enhancement. Where teachers view distance learning technologies as non-threatening, they will recognize that using the resources of highly talented pedagogues and professionally prepared video graphics can substantially reduce the workload for individual classroom teachers.

Additionally, local teacher leaders could view the incorporation of distance learning technologies into daily classroom practice as an opportunity to gain recognition as a specialized and technologically advanced profession. As training in the acquisition, use and assessment of outcomes related to distance learning becomes more prominent, teachers could make the case that their social and economic status in the community should be raised.

Legal barriers to interactive distance learning

Teacher certification statutes, previously discussed, pose important barriers to interactive distance learning in states other than Oregon. A recent study of state education statutes and administrative rules in four western states found several potential legal barriers to using technology-based substitutions for the human teacher in the classroom (Pheasant 1989). Special certification standards for mathematics and science teachers were also found to threaten distance learning programs. Other statutory or administrative rules raise potential barriers to technological substitution of the teacher in some states, but not others. The most important of these ancillary regulations include pupil-teacher ratio requirements, mandates

fixing the proportion of district budgets to be used for teacher salaries, state-mandated textbooks, and state aid formulas based on teachers or teaching units.[6]

Future trends and issues

Certainly, in the near-term future (the next three to five years), the impact of distance learning on teacher jobs will be small. Providers have been careful to provide programs in subject areas where teacher shortages currently exist. Furthermore, with a few notable exceptions, rural schools are the main targets of the marketing efforts by distance learning providers. Nevertheless, if school district budgets become tighter, teacher shortages grow worse in such subjects as foreign languages, mathematics, computer science, and the physical and biological sciences, or state-legislatures add more years of foreign language, mathematics, and science to high school graduation standards, the political and economic environment will come into direct conflict with state teacher union protectionist efforts in many states.

In the years ahead, teacher unions may find themselves in some difficult political battles either to prevent school districts from obtaining and expanding interactive distance learning instruction or to compensate teachers for mastering its use. Not only must teacher unions contend with the changing landscape of state and local financial support for education, but they also face challenges in the ever-shifting arena of public opinion, where the clamor of parental demands for education of higher quality with greater choice have already reached the ears of state and local policy-makers and moved issues related to excellence and choice to the top of the educational agenda. Parents and other citizens who see interactive distance learning as an equitable and cost-effective solution to demands for more and better courses will not stand idly by while teacher unions seek to restrain the use of this technology by imposing legislative, judicial, or collectively bargained barriers.

In recent years, legislation in several states has made it easy for parents to offer instruction in the home. According to Lines '[t]wenty-nine state statutes now explicitly allow instruction at home by a parent or tutor' (Lines 1987: 514). In addition, several of these states, including Oregon, do not require the parent to be certified. Unless state laws preventing interactive distance learning in the public schools are changed, parents in many states will subscribe to interactive distance learning services at home. In the May 1989 issue of *Oregon Focus*, a Oregon Public Broadcasting monthly publication, Maynard Orme, OPB's Executive Director, states that because of improved antenna technology, the size of a satellite dish can be reduced from 6 feet to 2 feet, so that it becomes less expensive and more feasible to mount them on the roof of private homes. Furthermore, 'targeted audience services such as direct two-way video and audio instruction', will become feasible through the development of a technology commonly referred to as 'compressed video' which reduces the bandwidth (and the cost) required to transmit video signals (Orme 1989: 19).

These and other technological developments will continue intensifying the pressure on teacher unions to maintain the status quo for their members. But state and national unions appear to have one of two choices in the face of technology that now and in the future can and will continue to replace the classroom teacher – at least in secondary schools: either erect legislative or collectively bargained barriers, as the railroad unions did when the diesel engine began to replace the steam engine, resisting the elimination of the fireman whose job was made obsolete by diesel technology; or try to work with these new technologies, as American automobile unions did, when they agreed to allow more robots on the assembly lines to meet industry-killing competition from the Japanese.

Notes

1. For example, the local and national print and electronic news media, including articles in professional journals, have focused on the present debate over satellite-transmitted broadcasts of daily news and information with commercial messages to schools in exchange for free satellite receiving antennas, television monitors, and other related equipment. At its annual convention in July 1989, the National Education Association joined other educational organizations in adopting a resolution condemning Channel One, the Whittle Communication television program providing commercially supported news to schools.
2. For a more detailed and up-to-date overview of the technology, applications, and research on interactive distance learning, see Kitchen (1987).
3. For further discussion of the recommendations, see pp. 14–15 of Subcommittee report. See also the Office of Technology Assistance Report (1988).
4. Oregon Administrative Rule 584-36-010, developed by the Teachers Standards and Practices Commission, states: 'Educators who are employed by public schools and who are compensated from public funds must hold certificates.'
5. For supportive as well as contrary explanations of this phenomenon, generally referred to in political science literature as the 'capture theory', see Lowi (1969) and Wilson (1980).
6. For earlier studies finding similar legal barriers to the use of technology in schools, see Scanlong and Weinberger (1973); Heinich and Ebert (1976); Wilkinson (1980); Duttweiller (1983); and Goldstein (1984).

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Business involvement in education in the 1990s

Kent McGuire
University of Colorado at Denver

Introduction

The 1980s have witnessed a tremendous growth in corporate interest and influence in education. A number of chief executive officers from major corporations participated with government and civic leaders in national task forces and commissions focused on education reform. At the same time, business-initiated partnerships with schools and school districts and corporate media campaigns supporting public education and specific school initiatives became commonplace occurrences. Businesses and corporate foundations are also aggressively using grants and donations, to support programs and initiatives consistent with their aspirations and expectations for the public schools.

Two distinctive forms of involvement grew most rapidly during the 1980s. The specifics differ from one locality to another, but the two modes of business engagement can be identified by their popular titles: business *roundtables* and business–education *partnerships*. Business roundtables (sometimes called task forces, leadership groups, forums or commissions) are typically organized for the purpose of bringing business community interests to bear on education program and policy decisions. These groups seek high-profile political roles, frequently combining the prestige and legitimacy of the corporate boardroom with significant fund raising to support publicity campaigns and political action lobbying. Several hundred business roundtable type influence groups sprang up in the years immediately preceding and following the 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence 1983). A detailed study of one such business group is presented in the Ray and Mickelson chapter in this volume.

In contrast with the roundtable groups, business-school partnerships are typically formed to provide support rather than pursue a reform agenda. For the most part, these partnerships are local in origin and impact. Their most frequent form is the 'adopt-a-school' program in which businesses contribute materials, staff expertise, and frequently cash to help meet specific school needs or offset burdensome costs. Among the largest and most widely publicized of these partnership ventures are Apple Computer Corporation's program of providing one micro-computer to every school in California and IBM's corporate sponsored 'Write to Read' computer-assisted instruction program. By various accounts, partnerships between business and local public schools number between 30,000 and 45,000.[1]

Whether from a support or policy standpoint, private sector involvement typically comes with assumptions about what schools should do to improve: how schools should be organized and managed, the subject matter that should be emphasized or strengthened, and the problems that should receive greater attention and resources. These assumptions influence both the nature of partnership activity and the recommendations business leaders endorse in national policy debates on education. Increasingly, partnerships are linked to specific school problems, such as improved math and science instruction or improved school

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attendance. Business proposals for reform range from early childhood education to high school dropout prevention, from compulsory school testing programs to educational choice through vouchers, from professionalization of teaching to close supervision and pay-for-performance merit pay schemes. All are offered with wide ranging rationales and often conflicting assumptions about how one or another of these proposals would lead to significantly improved school performance.

In this crowded landscape of private sector activities and policy initiatives, what should we expect of business–education interaction over the next decade? Will business interests and motives coalesce around a coherent set of specific program and policy proposals, or will mixed motives and divergent assumptions about school organization and management, pedagogy and subject priorities keep business interests and pressures fragmented or contradictory?

Rationales for business involvement

No single explanation accounts for the full range of business involvement in public education, but some discussion of the various interests and motives might help in understanding the forms business–education interaction could take in the next decade. Three distinct but related reasons are worthy of note: strategic self-interest, corporate civic responsibility and nationwide social and economic crisis.

Strategic self-interest

If strategic self-interest were the only reason for current private sector involvement, businesses could be expected to concentrate on working with higher education institutions. Resources available through colleges and universities can be used to advance such business objectives as product development, market research, production problem solving, and access to highly trained professional and technical staff.

Business firms do, of course, have strategic interests in elementary and secondary schooling. High school graduates make up the primary source of low and medium skilled workers. Hence, any improvement in the overall quality of the typical high school graduate (provided that improvement does not diminish the supply to the point of scarcity) reduces business training costs. Naturally, therefore, concern for raising the skill and competency of entry-level workers is reason enough for direct business involvement in school programs for children and youth. It certainly explains a long history of business collaboration with career and vocational education programs. In times of rapidly changing markets and production technologies, self-interested business leaders may be willing to make rather large investments in upgrading the capacity of the schools to prepare workers for successful entry into the job market.

While business interest in entry-level job preparation is easy to understand, businesses also have a significant interest in overall community satisfaction with local school performance. Community confidence in the public school system is an important factor in the recruitment of highly skilled managerial and professional workers. Businesses located in communities where schools have a reputation for poor performance will have difficulty persuading education-conscious workers to bring their families to live in the area.

In sum, strategic self-interest leads business to be concerned with how well public schools: (1) prepare entry level workers; (2) contribute to a climate of product development

and organizational innovation; and (3) assist in attracting managerial and professional employees to the region.

Corporate civic responsibility

A second rationale for business involvement in education is corporate civic responsibility. Business leaders often develop a sense of pride and ownership in the communities where their corporations are located. These leaders naturally adopt an attitude of support for stability and growth in their communities as a matter of good public relations and altruistic interest in using their resources for the benefit of others. The public schools benefit from this sense of civic responsibility in the same way as hospitals, churches, service clubs and charitable organizations do. Traditionally, this interest has led to school board service and membership on school district advisory and planning committees. More recently, there has been a growth in the willingness of business leaders to assist with fund raising, provision of materials and sharing of specialized technical staff resources.

Nationwide social and economic crisis

Neither strategic self-interest nor corporate civic responsibility can fully account for the dramatic upsurge of business interest in the public schools in recent years. To fully explain the current wave of business involvement we must examine the rise of a broad-based sense of nationwide social and economic crisis and its linkage to a belief that the schools are responsible for generating strong civic and workplace values. A growing agreement among business leaders on this broader sense of national crisis has led them to believe that substantial energy should be devoted to pressing for dramatic changes in the form, or at least the performance, of the public schools.[2]

Corporate embrace of a national crisis rationale for involvement is not unprecedented in American history. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the American economy was being transformed from one based on agriculture to one based on manufacturing, there was a similar period of business interest in educational reform and improvement. In an agrarian economy the schools were not seen as having a major role in preparing students for the economy. Morality and religious teachings, together with the nurturance of intellectual and civic sensibilities, were the primary focus of school curricula in that context. As the economy changed and wage labor replaced farm work as the primary source of economic well being for ordinary Americans, however, a controversy over the proper role of the school developed. Business and education leaders ultimately agreed that schools had a major role to play in preparing students to become future workers. By the 1930s, the idea that public schools should 'train' children, especially high school students, was firmly established in the minds of parents, educators and employers alike (Cuban 1983). The slogan 'If you want a good job, get a good education' was born in this context and has controlled thinking about school program and policy for more than two generations.

So, while altruism and civic responsibility are often cited as the well springs of private sector interest in education, recent business involvement appears to be more strongly motivated by an acute sense of economic risk. Some observers note that the business community has recently come to believe that it must literally save the public schools from 'a rising tide of mediocrity' (National Commission 1983). This new anxious aggressiveness toward the schools is fueled by the fear that the US economy is losing ground in the

international marketplace and that the schools must be improved to restore economic competitiveness and assure national security.[3] Traditional business concerns with reducing expenditures and making marginal improvements in school operations can still be found, of course. However, the magnitude and tone of current involvements, while linked to a national sense of crisis, embody very different goals than those governing the earlier shift from agriculture to industry (documented well in Callahan's 1962 classic, *Education and the Cult of Efficiency*). The character of this recent interest of business leaders in assuring that public schools become involved in solving national economic development problems can be seen in the following sample statements by business leaders:

> About two years ago, a CED study of the nation's lagging productivity growth sparked renewed concern over the important relationship between education and economic growth in the United States. An initial survey of our trustees revealed the strongly held conviction that our education system was graduating too many students who lacked the basic requirements for gaining productive employment, and this educational failure was perceived as contributing to our declining competitiveness in world markets. (CED 1984)

> Put simply, students must go to school longer, study more, and pass more advanced subject matter. There is no excuse for vocational programs that warehouse students who perform poorly in academic subjects or for diplomas that register nothing more than years of school attendance. From an economic standpoint, higher standards in the schools are the equivalent of competitiveness internationally. (Hudson Institute 1987)

> To have a high-quality workforce that is competitive internationally, we will have to improve the academic and vocational skills of those at the bottom of the ladder. (Berlin and Sum 1988)

> Even in more normal times, there is a strong case to be made for a deepened business involvement in our schools. If the first purpose of our schools is to create good citizens, the second is to create productive people. Business ought to do all it reasonably can to help our schools fulfill that second purpose . . . (New York Stock Exchange 1982)

The broad sense of crisis in the national economy creates fertile ground for an ambivalent love/hate relationship with the schools. On the one hand, business leaders chastise the schools for failing to instill rudimentary basic skills and core social values. On the other hand, they feel constrained to support the educational system which, itself, seems threatened by drugs, gangs, inadequate funding, low interest in teaching, large numbers of non-English speaking students, teenage pregnancy, dropouts, and countless other problems large and small. They alternately demand better prepared workers and solutions to deep cultural and social problems linked to family and community disorders.

A framework for analyzing business involvement

Research on the mechanisms by which the business community expresses its interest in the schools is quite limited. Much of what is available addresses rather narrow questions regarding the formation and operation of school–business partnerships.[4] Historically, partnerships have focused on 'educating' parents, students, and even school personnel on the inner workings of the free-enterprise system or on issues close to the needs of business, such as career or vocational education. What is striking about the partnerships of the 1980s – whether through 'adopt-a-school' or other mechanisms – is the broad agenda of the activities included. Today's partnerships include a much more comprehensive set of activities, covering the full range of subject areas and grade levels, and designed to meet the needs of school staff as well as students.

A few important insights into the nature of the contemporary business–education relationship can be gleaned from the rather modest pool of available research. As noted above, for example, the scope of business involvement is fairly well documented. More importantly, analysis of recent work reveals that there are three distinct roles or activity patterns used by for business to change school policies, programs and operations. They

might be appropriately described as banker/philanthropist, innovator/change agent, and policy reformer roles.

Business leaders as philanthropists

Whether in conjunction with task force activity or through local school partnerships, check writing and philanthropy have a long history as the foundation of corporate involvement in the public schools. McLaughlin (1988) refers to this as the 'banking' model where corporations make financial contributions to local school systems, often to support specific business oriented interests but frequently for activities or outcomes determined by the district as well. In a number of urban settings, for example, corporate donors belong to 'Percent Clubs' – associations where peer pressure serves to provide a predictable level of donations to the schools. This idea originated in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where member companies still maintain a common level of philanthropic support for the local schools. Even where these clubs are not formally organized, however, it is fair to say that the practice of establishing group norms for giving to education is common. From the school's perspective, the idea is to generate additional revenue for predetermined needs. From the corporation's point of view, voluntary giving provides good public relations and has the virtue of a simply administered tax deductible approach to directed influence.

During the 1980s there has been an increasing tendency for corporations to link philanthropy with specific program interests or goals. Many corporate donors now ask how their resources are being used. They want to know if their grants improve the quality of education.

Does the philanthropic grant approach significantly affect school operations or improve the overall quality of education? There is simply no good evidence available on this question. Since both schools and businesses gain obvious benefits from participation in the philanthropic model, the existence of relatively large numbers of such relationships cannot be taken as evidence of any sort of systematic impact. For the same reason, however, it is quite likely that business leaders will continue to serve as banker/philanthropists for the schools for the foreseeable future. It seems realistic to expect the trend of linking financial grants to specific activities or outcomes will continue into the 1990s, both because it creates a more personally rewarding level of involvement between individual business leaders and the schools they support, and because general anxiety about school performance has led the business community to want to see 'results' from their investments.

Business leaders as organizational change agents

The Alliance for Education in Worcester, Massachusetts (formerly the Center for School Business Initiatives) has the following mission statement:

> The Alliance initiates joint ventures between public education and the private sector in order to provide the schools with additional financial resources, volunteer community involvement, professional development opportunities, technical assistance, innovative program development, audio-visual resources and advocacy for education. (Public Education Fund 1986: 256)

Such statements move the participating businesses away from the banker/philanthropist model described above. The goals of involvement have shifted from general support to targeted efforts aimed at producing organizational and programmatic changes in the schools. The Alliance represents an aggressive, multi-district organization for brokering business and

community resources. It was created to foster change and improvement in the schools by leveraging money and expertise to meet identified school and community needs. The Alliance's Principal Center is a good example of its approach to schools. In this program, business support provide professional development and management training to school principals throughout Worcester County.

The Alliance typifies a mechanism for involvement intended to address specific goals or opportunities for change in the schools. Public relations and altruistic philanthropy motives are important, but they are secondary to self-conscious advocacy and strategic intervention. Businesses using the change agent approach seek organization and program level innovations in the schools. They rely on technical expertise as well as financial support to produce the desired results.

Target Science, an initiative of the Los Angeles Educational Partnership, is another example. This program links 'science-rich' resources from industry, higher education and the community to selected clusters of schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District. One component of this initiative is the creation of K-12 'science dialogues' aimed at establishing a collegial community of teachers across all grade levels within a school cluster. Another component, the Industry Initiatives for Math and Science, provides secondary math teachers with opportunities to participate in paid project work within science-related industries. Science forums and workshops are also used to diffuse knowledge more deeply into the schools.

Examples of this change-agent mode can also be found in the national arena, certainly among the efforts of corporate foundations. The Exxon Education Foundation, for example, recently approved a $600,000 grant to the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES), a group of 56 high schools around the country organized to experiment with new approaches to teaching and learning. CES is organized to provide technical assistance and networking for coalition members has linked itself with a number of national business and education groups to provide a vehicle for addressing related issues of school program development and resource allocation.[5] The Ford Foundation's Urban Math Collaboratives, which operate in a number of cities, also exhibit this change-agent feature. They are designed to build linkages with industry and community resources to strengthen existing teaching and learning.

Increasingly, partnerships are used to facilitate and maintain new and important linkages between schools, universities and corporations with the express goal of enhancing teaching and learning. There is no reason to believe that this kind of strategic mechanism linking business with the schools will not continue into the next century, particularly if the collaboration provides tangible evidence of improved student outcomes.

Business leaders as policy reformers: A third element for linking business interests to school operations involves direct political action to encourage policy change and organizational reform. The most obvious change in school-business relations during the 1980s is the expansive growth of this overtly political approach. Broad-based concern about the economy has engendered a willingness to abandon long standing deference to educators concerning the direction of school programs and practices. New business initiatives are chronicled in reports by major national organizations. In 1982, for example, the New York Stock Exchange published a report urging American business to recognize its stake in public education (New York Stock Exchange 1982). In the same year the US Chamber of Commerce issued *American Education: An Economic Issue*, and increased its effort to stimulate local chambers to become involved with the schools (Chamber 1982). In 1985, the Committee for Economic Development released its report, *Investing in Our Children*, and launched a series of roundtables to carry the dialogue around the country. In 1987, the Conference Board held a

major national conference on 'The New Education Agenda for Business'. There is little doubt about the role played by the national business organizations and individual corporate executives in stimulating and expanding a political reform emphasis in school–business relationships.

At the state level, business pressure for reform has produced tangible results. Business leaders in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Minnesota, South Carolina, Texas and Washington have actively encouraged reform. All of the active business organizations have generated or participated in the development of broad reform agendas. Some have used fiscal resources and political influence to move reform proposals through legislatures and executive branch agencies. The California Business Roundtable, for example, is widely recognized as a key player in the campaign to fund an $800 million education package contained in that state's omnibus reform act, Senate Bill 813 (1983).

South Carolina, which enacted a one-cent sales tax increase in 1984 to support its reform agenda, stands out for a number of reasons. First, the business community was centrally involved in constructing the agenda for education reform in state. Second, corporations came up with the resources to promote the proposed reforms. Third, business leaders have been included, through the South Carolina Business–Education Committee, in the process of oversight of the 1984 reform legislation. Recently, a new business–education group proposed a reform package for the 1990s. On 1 June 1989, the General Assembly passed 'Target 2000: School Effort for the Next Decade', which builds on the earlier improvement act. Included in the legislation is a provision to create a structured roundtable of business people to set goals and activities for a statewide business-partnership program.[6]

In Washington state, a roundtable initiated its own research concerning the issues facing the state's education system and recently has offered up a reform agenda with a price tag in excess of $123 million. Recommendations range from investments in pilot restructuring initiatives, early childhood education, and class size reduction to a new degree program in teacher education (Washington Roundtable 1989).

Unfortunately, relatively little of this activity has been subject to research or objective review. Hence, there is not much information from which to generalize about business involvement in policy development. Mazzoni and Clugston (1987) offer one of the few studies available. They portray the Minnesota Business Partnership as a 'policy innovator' in school reform. In 1982, the Business Partnership created an Educational Quality Task Force which, in turn, launched a comprehensive review of student performance and cost effectiveness in the public schools. Mazzoni and Clugston looked particularly at the manner in which the Minnesota Business Partnership sought to influence the state legislative agenda related to education. Partnership influence was characterized as modest for a series of reasons. Among them was the lack of political authority to implement their agenda, underscoring the fact that business leaders cannot just assume that their ideas will translate smoothly into law. Still, the state's education policy system is said to have been significantly affected, especially in setting the agenda for reform, as a direct result of the time and resources devoted by the Partnership to education.

These same forces are at work, though often with different results, at the local level. The emergence of Local Education Funds (LEFs) during the 1980s will provide a good case study for the next decade (Public Education Fund 1985). LEFs are organized in over 45 cities nationwide and operate as third party intermediaries to expand support for the public schools. Sample statements from LEFs around the country reveal their goals and illuminate their strategies:

> To enlarge the constituency of and support for public education, to encourage imaginative and creative approaches to educating Memphis Public School students and to generate enthusiasm in support of public schools. (PEF 1985)

> To secure resources from individuals, corporations and foundations to be distributed to support programs for the Bridgeport Public Schools. (PEF 1985)
>
> Partners in Education is a coalition of business, industry and civic educational interests committed to: (1) linking the schools and the community in a comprehensive program of school improvement; and (2) building the public's confidence in the schools through this program. (PEF 1985)

What seems to distinguish the LEFs from other business partnerships is in how they view their role in the community. Resources and activities, either in dollars or expertise, are seen by these LEFs as 'instruments' for building broad-based coalitions that understand the importance of the public schools. What LEFs offer for those interested in understanding business involvement is an opportunity to see if a deliberate strategy of direct long term business involvement in private fund-raising and program advocacy can substantially alter school operations, particularly in difficult inner city environments.

The 1980s have established an impressive record of national, state and local participation by business leaders in agenda setting and the development of school reform proposals. A growing conviction among private sector leaders that long-term social and economic benefits will arise from enhanced public school performance suggests that vigorous advocacy and direct political action will continue in the years to come.

New realities of business involvement

Does this framework – banker/philanthropist, change agent, policy reformer – sharpen our understanding of contemporary business participation and influence in public education? At a minimum, it helps to differentiate among qualitatively distinct forms of interaction. Surveys continue to paint a fairly traditional picture of banker/philanthropist partnerships. The landscape is still made up of such familiar activities as: awards for students, scholarships prizes for teachers and donations of equipment, materials, trips and other resources only marginally integrated into the instruction process or linked with the goals of the schools. But, there are many examples where business people have asked tough questions of themselves as well as of the schools, insisting on forms of interaction that make more sense, economically as well as educationally. This is especially the case where business involvement is characterized by an emphasis on the change agent or policy reformer modes of action. While it is too early to assess the impacts in educational terms, of the new and broader forms of involvement, it is certainly more substantive in nature, makes more sense for students and teachers and leads to new political allies for the public schools. In short, looking at these various modes of involvement is helpful in illuminating their motives and goals, and thus, in directing attention to possible impacts.

The picture is not complete, however. We are still on the learning curve in terms of collaborative efforts between the schools and the private sector. Small businesses and small business organizations have not become major players.[7] Moreover, it is uncertain whether leaders in the small business sector of the economy see school–business relationships as important. Where small business partnerships do exist, they are often fragile, situational, and highly dependent on the individuals who have created them (Nachtigal *et al.* 1988). The rhetoric of big business leaders and the national organizations that represent them does not seem to be reaching local small business leaders.

A host of new issues on the landscape are likely to complicate the interaction between schools and the private sector. Questions about whether an emphasis on the acquisition of 'basic skills' is limiting students' 'high order thinking skills' are beginning to muddy the dialogue about what kind of school programs are needed (see Ray and Mickelson chapter 8).

New technologies are threatening to change the form of the school making it more difficult for educators and business leaders to reach agreement and needed reforms (see the discussion of restructuring the Timar and the discussion of technology by Piele in chapters 4 and 6). Meanwhile, re-examination of the issues of federal leadership and minority rights threatens to change the whole context of the discussion (see chapters 2 and 3 by Clark and Astuto and Orfield and Peskin). In sum, there is much this framework does not tell us about all of the factors shaping contemporary business–education interaction, particularly going into the 1990s.

A research agenda?

What can we realistically expect in the 1990s? Will any single approach to business involvement emerge as dominant? In what way should we expect the interactions between business and education to change? These questions need to become the subjects of serious investigation. A research agenda might take off in any of the following directions.

Beneath much of the activity in the 1980s has been the assumption that a favorable culture – a sense of civic responsibility – is critical to business–education interaction and involvement. Worthy of analysis is the question of how this culture is formed. We know it is not legislated nor wished into experience. A great deal of effort is given to articulating the need for interaction, much less to careful examination of the strategies employed to bring it about. What enables a statewide business roundtable to be effective in developing a common vision of reform? How do the Local Education Funds sponsors go about building confidence and constituency support for the public schools? What strategies do they employ? The business role as policy innovator is key and it depends on a strong understanding of how private sector influence is best used to influence the policy agenda.

Another area where research could facilitate understanding is in the identification of problems that best lend themselves to solution via collaboration and partnership. It is true that combining the power of private and public sector agencies is the most effective way to tackle tough problems like education reform at the state level or in central cities? Or do these collaborations interfere with professional judgment and democratic governance to the detriment of school performance? How do public–private partnerships affect other public service functions, e.g., the public works infrastructure, health, welfare, employment training? What are the benefits/costs of involving non-government institutions in carrying out historically public decisions through partnership activity? What lessons do these partnerships offer for resource allocation and governance in the public sector?

A third area of research concerns the partnerships themselves. There is a widely known folklore and much unsolicited advice about how to form them or raise money to keep them going. But little is known about the factors that threaten their existence or contribute to their vitality. Nor is it obvious what they do best. What is the nature of their most important contribution? Is it in creating stable coalitions for revenue? Do they enhance local capacity to manage change? Is their chief virtue simply in applying pressure on the education establishment?

Much could be learned from a careful documentation of the enormous variety of existing partnerships. If the 1980s are any indication, the banker/philanthropists will probably find it easy to stay involved, but hard to secure meaningful results. They do not spend the time needed to identify strategic opportunities for real change and thus are likely to reinforce the status quo rather than lead in school reform. The policy innovators are also likely to find the next decade difficult and frustrating, not for lack of good ideas but for lack

of the authoritative power needed to enact the ideas they embrace. Not taking the time to understand the substantially different interests of government officials and corporate leaders will complicate their efforts. The change agents are most likely to find the next several years productive and exciting. Without a better understanding of the difference between marginal change and substantive reform than is now available to them, however, they are likely to be frustrated at the lack of broad-based policy and system change. The dollar investments, if current patterns of involvement are any indication, will be far too small to move entire school districts.

It is perhaps unrealistic to expect much more than is now produced by the various forms of business involvement in education, certainly not before we understand them better. What the 1990s do offer is a chance to learn about the dynamics of current interaction patterns. There is a real need for more study of who is involved, for what reasons. And we need a stronger sense of how these interactions are translated into the broader political agenda of local communities, states, and the nation. It is very difficult to speculate more about the nature of business involvement absent answers to these basic questions.

Notes

1. A survey by the National Center for Education Statistics identified over 30,000 partnerships as of 1987. Depending on definition and interpretation, other sources produce different figures. A recent survey of 500 large and 6000 small companies by the Committee for Economic Development found that half of the responding large companies and 20% of the small companies have programs to assist schools. For an in-depth discussion of the partnership movement in public education, see Otterbourg and Timpane (1986).
2. It is fair to say that this broader rationale for business involvement drives much of the activity in the 1980s. Recently, we have seen corporate leaders such as David Kearns of Xerox or Bill Woodside (retired executive of Primerica) express the view that education is a 'public good' of importance not just to employers but to society. For a more complete discussion of the argument, see Timpane (1982).
3. The 7 November, 1988 issue of *Fortune* magazine clearly expresses this point of view, suggesting that unless the private sector assumed greater interest in public education, there would be little chance that major reform in American schooling would occur. *Fortune* held a national conference last year to discuss what business could do to turn the school around; see *Fortune* (1988).
4. One good source for a review, particularly around education and training issues' is the National Institute for Work and Learning (1981). With the recent increase in partnership activity, a number of articles and booklets have been published by and for those interested in establishing partnerships; see for instance Chaffee (1980) and Shelton (1987).
5. A fuller description of the Coalition can be found in the Timar chapter of this volume.
6. 29 June 1989: memorandum from Terry Peterson, Executive Director of the Joint Business-Education Subcommittee of the South Carolina Education Improvement Act, to representatives of the education and business communities.
7. There are obvious reasons in terms of capacity and resources. At the same time, each year a smaller and smaller proportion of all Americans work for large firms and this begs the question of the forms of involvement for small business that will work.

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Business leaders and the politics of school reform

Carol Axtell Ray and Roslyn Arlin Mickelson
University of North Carolina, Charlotte

Throughout the history of public education in the United States, business leaders have, at various times and for various reasons, turned their attention to school reform. During the past decade corporate executives have once again become active in school issues. Their contemporary involvement centers around a widely-held view that public education is flawed, a view that has filtered down from national to local business leaders. Local business leaders' involvement offers researchers the opportunity to study the rhetoric and politics which surface in discussions and debates about school reform.

The focal point of this case study is the 'Sunbelt City' Task Force on Education and Jobs. Our research and analysis reveal that the Task Force originated from a conceptualization of the need for educational reform, offered by business members and nominally accepted by the entire Task Force as legitimate. Subsequently, the conceptualization was enlarged and reformulated, primarily through ideas and arguments advanced by educators. The enlarged statement recast the educational reform problem. Rather than reform of school processes and curricula, the Task Force's concluding report defined the issue as the need to overcome the deficits of low income families.

This chapter describes the processes by which various Task Force members presented evidence and attempted to craft a consensus about the perceived deficits in education and accompanying employment problems facing Sunbelt City. We begin with a brief review of the historical interests of US business leaders in educational processes, the recent macro context, and then report and discuss the unfolding of the social problems construction process within the Task Force. We conclude by discussing future research agendas.

The historical context of business interest in education

'The Education Crisis: What Business Can Do' (Perry 1988), a *Fortune* magazine article, nicely captures the US business community's apprehension about secondary education and is just one among scores of examples of the current career of education-as-a-social-problem. The 1980s, however, is not the first historical period during which business leaders have mobilized to intervene in education. In the early nineteenth century in Britain, for instance, the expanding bourgeoisie demanded that commercial languages – rather than classical languages – be taught in the universities along with commercial law and bookkeeping (Pollard 1965).

At the dawn of the twentieth century, sorting and tracking were installed in US schools, some argue, to achieve the 'efficient' allocation of students to the occupational sector (Spring 1976, Heydebrand and Burris 1984). By 1910, the word 'vocation' had gained wide currency (Gilbert 1977), and the new decade, characterized by contention over how to

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approach the issue, culminated in the 1917 Smith-Hughes Vocational Education Act (Lazarsen and Grubb 1974).

In vocational schools, youngsters – mainly immigrant children – were to learn not only English but also the ethic of internalized, individualized work (Gilbert 1977: 112). Wrigley (1982), Katz (1966), and Katznelson and Weir (1988) chronicle the struggles between local business elites and the working class over the content and form of education in the United States during the Progressive Era.

Bowles and Gintis (1976) review these developments and argue that the form and content of public education are defined by a central goal: reproduction of labor power. Tension is created in the pursuit of this goal, however. The business community wants a docile and obedient work force in the lower levels of company hierarchies. The sort of education which produces this kind of worker is different than that which college bound youngsters are expected to acquire.[1]

Following the first quarter of the century, corporate leaders' interest and active intervention in the educational process either contracted or expanded depending on the economic and social features of given periods. Following the 1968 upheavals in Paris and the shock of the Lordstown auto workers' strike of the early 1970s (cf., Salpukas 1973), for example, a new set of concerns emerged. The working class was redefined as not undereducated but as too educated. As a result, a reassessment of management techniques began. Many of the neo-human relations practices installed in companies during the early 1970s were a direct response to the 'problem' of 'blue collar blues' which business leaders now attributed to the unmet needs for participation and autonomy among educated workers (Thompson 1983: 68). Meanwhile, social scientists argued that many wage earners were indeed overeducated and overcredentialed for their tasks (Berg 1970, Braverman 1974, Collins 1979). By the close of the 1970s, however, the overeducated worker seemed to have disappeared.

Today, in a rather stunning reversal, corporate leaders complain that employees are badly *under*educated for their work roles. While some of their assertions are directed at the population of students who graduate from college, increasing emphasis is given to high school graduates and high school dropouts. These new undereducated workers, business leaders claim, are a result of the poor quality of secondary schools.

The productivity crisis

The construction of secondary education as a social problem must be considered within the context of another emerging social problem – the 'productivity crisis' – identified in the late 1970s. The term 'productivity' underwent redefinition during this period, moving from a concept workers used to make wage claims, to one corporate leaders used to discuss economic stagnation (Block and Burns 1986). Spector and Kitsuse point out that when existing terms are given new meanings, something important has happened (1987:8). In the case of the productivity crisis, corporate leaders successfully appropriated an intellectual resource previously used by a contending group and established the phrase 'productivity crisis' as a widely-stated and uncritically accepted political symbol.

Corporate leaders soon began exploring possible solutions to the productivity crisis. Two particular methods of experimentation deserve mention – corporate culture and corporate restructuring – because features of both are lodged within the most recent attempts at secondary school reform. Each of these potential solutions to the productivity crisis, however, consisted of mechanisms internal to the US workplace, while secondary school reform attempts are aimed at an institution in corporations' external environment.

Corporate culture as a management technique, lauded by some (Peters and Waterman 1982, Pascale 1985), and critically analyzed by others (Ray 1986), was one possibility. Many company leaders believed that the utilization of intense methods of employee socialization, together with the elaboration of symbols and rituals would foster employee devotion to the firm thereby promoting the generation of 'excellent' (that is to say, productive) companies. In general, this effort implied that workers were to blame for the productivity crisis because of their lack of diligent effort.

The other widely practiced strategy for solving the productivity crisis was corporate restructuring. Companies became 'lean and mean' with all excess fat (usually employees; often senior, high wage employees) trimmed away. Slimmed-down firms were expected to become productive (Russell 1987). Restructuring alone was not enough, however. The perceived need for intense and appropriate socialization of employees remained. In the early 1980s, business leaders began to ask, 'Might needed socialization be accomplished before new workers entered the workplace?' An affirmative answer to this question points to the reformation and restructuring of public schools in a renewed effort to properly socialize future workers.

Origins of the new claims directed at education

Just as these internal mechanisms to create more productive enterprises were being explored, *An Open Letter to the American People. A NATION AT RISK: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (1983) was published by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. Most of the members were educators or former educators, but the report, highly critical of the educational system, was implicitly addressed to business leaders. The language of the report conveys this address. It argued, for example, that one of the 'raw materials' already in place to reform the educational system was 'the traditional belief that paying for education is an investment in ever-renewable human resources that are more durable and flexible than capital plant or equipment . . . ' (National Commission on Excellence in Education 1983: 16).

Additionally, the report warned, the US must have an educated work force to remain globally competitive. Immediately following its publication, business leaders, caught up in the corporate culture frenzy, paid little heed to the report. Indeed, the recommendations of the Nation-at-Risk report did not seem to fall under the purview of business at all since the solutions emphasized the need for quality teachers and the correction of alleged weak content and processes of education. Such indifference soon changed.

The second round of activities began when the Committee on Economic Development (CED) appointed Owen 'Brad' Butler, CEO of Procter & Gamble, to chair a group to conduct a broad range study to 'assess the overall quality of the educational system, pinpoint the problems impeding its success, and suggest solutions to improve the public schools' (Butler in Levine and Trachtman 1988: ix). The report, *Investing in Our Children: Business and the Public Schools*, appeared in 1985 and was prepared mainly by business leaders. Its tenor paralleled, and its conclusions reinforced the themes found in *A Nation at Risk*. Importantly, the CED report explicitly placed the business community at the center of public school reform.

At the same time, President Reagan and Secretary of Education Bell began to speak out strongly in favor of business support of education to compensate for federal spending cuts particularly in the areas of vocational and adult education (Useem 1986: 61, 104). Reagan insisted that federal aid to education had failed, and that the states, along with business, should expand their leadership efforts in education (Useem 1986: 9). The activity of business

leaders in the educational arena grew markedly during the eight years of the Reagan administration.

Thus, by the middle of the decade, the federal government's withdrawal and the still-vexing effects of the productivity crisis pushed educational reform to the forefront of business concerns creating rather dramatic effects. By 1987, more than 300 business-initiated studies about the quality and content of education, and suggestions for reform had been completed (Business Roundtable 1988). There was consensus among them that 'something needed to be done' since the alleged weakness of the US educational system was one cause of the productivity crisis. Drawing on the corporate model in its recommendations for school reform, Kearns and Doyle's (1988) book, *Winning the Brain Race: A Bold Plan to Make our Schools Competitive*, captured the strong socialization and restructuring themes of business leaders' current attempts.

The uncontested 'grounds statement'

In any social dialogue, certain statements are offered and accepted as the 'grounds for belief' in the viewpoints and assertions being expressed. These 'grounds statements' (Best 1987, Spector and Kitsuse 1987) articulate agreements regarding socially important facts and values. They are presumably true and can be evoked as a basis for accepting other ideas and inferences. Beginning with *A Nation at Risk*, and reaffirmed in hundreds of other studies, the same prevailing 'grounds statement' (Best 1987) appears in virtually every report. Briefly, it is that in order to remain globally competitive, the US must have an educated workforce. Like any powerful grounds statement, this assertion seems intuitively obvious and objectively neutral. Indeed there has been little, if any, contention over it in any sector of US society. On the grounds of this global economic vulnerability, business leaders undertook to construct socially a definition of the educational problem. By linking economic competition to education the statement justified the involvement of business leaders in school reform. The grounds statement becomes an 'intellectual resource' (Block and Burns 1986), legitimating leaders' intervention in what might otherwise be seen as a wholly educational matter. Bolstered by reports which show US youngsters lagging behind students in other industrialized nations on standardized achievement tests, business leaders can use the statement to shape discussions about educational reform and to deflect attention from possible negative consequences of their own policies *vis-à-vis* global competition.

This grounds statements, asserting a link between schooling and economic competition, captures the attention of a wide cross-section of the American public. It draws together two distinct but related social conditions which many be considered problematic and which are associated with the kind of deep mythic themes and broad cultural preoccupations that attract and sustain media and public attention (Hilgarten and Bosk 1988).

The first problematic condition, found in the grounds statement, is the novel possibility that the US may be at risk of losing (or has already lost) a position of leadership in the global economy. The second problematic condition in the statement is the questionable availability of an educated work force for the US economy. These problematic conditions are novel. Ordinary Americans ask in dismay, 'What? Do we not have an educated work force already?' Novel claims such as these attract interest because they claim to identify critical new phenomena (Best 1987). Thus, this grounds statement maintains control over the definition of education-as-a-social-problem in a way which can successfully compete against other asserted social problems for media and public attention (Hilgarten and Bosk 1988).

In this new statement education is neither promoted for its own sake, nor to secure a more equal and just society (Katznelson and Weir 1988: 212). Thus, those who uncritically accept the new grounds statement implicitly neglect earlier contentions that an educated citizenry is important for a democratic society, and that education enables individuals to make more informed decisions concerning child rearing, political participation, consumer choices, work, and leisure. In place of democratic and personal grounds, the new statement highlights the theme that education is important primarily because of its capacity to rescue, perpetuate, or enhance US business profitability.

Things were getting worse

One useful tactic for promoting a particular social problem construction is the assertion that things are getting worse, and more deterioration will surely occur if something is not done (Best 1987). By 1987, the business oriented grounds statement began to produce a flood of business oriented 'things are getting worse' analyses. Heralded by the popular press, (*Time* 1987, *Business Week* 1987, *US News and World Reports* 1987), a labor shortage suddenly appeared. Business leaders began to believe, in part, that the 'product' of the educational system was not only defective, but also in short supply.

Simultaneously, new reports about educational reform increasingly accentuated the schools' failure to meet the challenges posed by low-income and minority students (e.g., Committee for Economic Development 1987). These reports suggested that it was not the entire educational system which needed to be reformed, but services for 'at risk' students: dropouts and non-college bound youngsters (cf., Daniels 1988).

As expected, the conceptualization of educational reform and global economic success began to undergo modification and become enlarged (Spector and Kitsuse 1987). The following recent elaborations of the original grounds statement then, are worth citing:

> A semi-literate population cannot support a productive economy. (Finn 1987)
>
> Poverty and ignorance could cause shortages of qualified workers and threaten America's stance in a global economy. (CED 1987)
>
> If we don't keep them in school and do a better job of educating them, who will do the work that enables the US to compete successfully in the global marketplace. (Business Roundtable 1988: 9)
>
> [Illiteracy is a] menacing problem which threatens our country and our democracy. (Hagemeyer 1988)

Thus, towards the end of the 1980s, corporate leaders still directed their attention at the 'restructuring' of the educational system (Perry 1988, Kearns and Doyle 1988), but placed increasingly heavy emphasis on low-income and minority students. At the national level it is clear that the concerns of business leaders about education are directly linked with the productivity crisis, the growing inability of US business to maintain global market leadership, and, most recently, a domestic labor shortage which is forcing businesses to hire workers previously labelled unemployable.

Secondary education as a social problem: a case study

Over the last few years committees and task forces have been formed in many communities to discuss the 'educational problem'. These local groups tend to be composed of more than one sector of the community. Their deliberations, colored by local history, coalitions, and events, take on a different character than those at the national

level. In the next few sections, we report a study of a local educational reform task force in Sunbelt City. We present and then analyze the content and form of this community's debate, discourse and ultimate consensus on how to approach the educational reform problem.

Members of the Sunbelt City Task Force on Education and Jobs originally concurred with the popular formulation of the grounds statement (i.e., a better schooled work force is needed for business reasons). Business members insisted that the basic problem with new workers is poor discipline linked, in turn, with low-income and minority status. This, they asserted, needed to be remediated in the schools. Members of the Task Force clashed when business leaders urged that socialization be moved from existing schools to a centralized vocational education high school. Educators on the Task Force argued that existing school organizations were adequate. Following the national trend, these educators claimed that weak families, not schools, cause undisciplined, unmotivated students. Proper socialization, they asserted, needs to occur when children are very young – the high school years are too late.

While the business leaders initiated and promoted the investigation into secondary education, their influence on the outcome of the Task Force was not as pronounced as some might expect. Surprisingly, influence flowed from the educational community towards business rather than the other way round. Given the business role in initiating the reform effort, the outcome was both counter-intuitive and puzzling. The processes by which this occurred, then, is of interest to both micro and macro social analysts.

The setting

Sunbelt City is a rapidly growing city with a population of nearly 400,000 within a metropolitan area of well over a million people. Over the past few years high technology and related manufacturing, along with financial and shipping companies, have moved to Sunbelt City for its moderate climate and to take advantage of low cost land, living and labor. Notably, middle and upper level management and technical employees have relocated with their firms.

The Sunbelt School District is geographically quite large (500 square miles), includes about 74,000 students and was desegregated by court order in the early 1970s. The student population is almost 40% black. Busing and annual pupil re-assignments are utilized to maintain racial balance. Initially a source of serious community conflict, the desegregation plan became a source of widespread community pride. Recently, however, complaints about busing and pupil re-assignment have been increasing, especially from relocated newcomers.

In early 1987, following a Chamber of Commerce survey documenting some members' dissatisfaction with young new employees, and the emergence of public complaints about both secondary schools and their graduates by company officers who had relocated to Sunbelt City, the Chamber staff organized a retreat for business leaders to discuss the major issues confronting business in Sunbelt City. The survey results were taken as evidence that 'something is wrong with the schools,' and the Education and Employment Task Force was born the following month.

The chancellor emeritus of a local university was appointed chair of the Task Force by the president of the Chamber of Commerce. Other community members invited to serve included several high ranking officers of businesses of various sizes, representatives of the community college and the department of education of Sunbelt University, highly placed Sunbelt City school district staff, a local school board member, a state school board member, and an officer of the local teachers' association. Also serving were officers of the Urban

League and the state Employment Securities Commission, an elected local government representative, and the director of the Chamber. Blacks comprised approximately one-sixth, and women one-fourth, of the Task Force membership.

The Task Force meetings usually took place in meeting rooms in the Chamber headquarters. At the first Task Force meeting, the chair appointed a business subcommittee whose charge was to articulate concerns about education and the work force shared by the corporate community. The business subcommittee meetings were conducted in executive dining rooms at the corporate headquarters of the chair of the subcommittee. Two of the business subcommittee members were recent arrivals in Sunbelt City, having relocated with their corporation headquarters and certain operations. As we later learned, these two men were largely responsible for the emphasis on education at the Chamber's retreat.

Sources and methods of data collection

This research project began in late 1987 with a grant of access to all Task Force meetings by the chair who introduced us to the members. We briefly described our anticipated roles as observers, not participants. We attended all meetings, the business subcommittees meetings, writing committee meetings, and the 'signature breakfast' and press conference during which the Task Force Report was signed by all members. Since the meetings were fairly large the presence of two researchers was unobtrusive and enhanced the reliability of the recorded field notes. In addition, each of us kept an interpretive journal.[2]

Interpretation of the Task Force deliberations and report relied on a social constructionist analysis (Spector and Kitsuse 1987). This perspective alerted us to changes in language, members' attributions of causes, their discussions of strategy, assessments of effects and outcomes, analyses of political alignments and so forth. The approach cautions against the researchers evaluating or judging whether or not members' claims, arguments, and accounts are valid or accurate; nor may the research team assign or impute motives to members. Recent constructionist formulations suggest paying special attention to the 'vernacular resources' members use and how they use these resources (Ibarra and Kitsuse 1989). The emphasis, then, is on the process by which members launch, deflect and subvert contending claims and counter claims, and how conflict and consensus are created.

The data and findings

The initial Task Force meeting featured a talk by the director of the Chamber. He repeated the grounds statement linking education and economic development, incorporating into it a problem statement. What is needed, he said, are 'higher educational skills and capabilities' to 'match employers' needs' so that the US can successfully 'compete with other countries', and so that Sunbelt City can 'compete with other cities'. With the context defined this way, the chair identified two specific purposes for the Task Force. The first was to encourage business members to tell educators what they expect and need from young new employees, and to describe what kinds of workers they were actually obtaining. Second, business members were to articulate ways that they could help education meet business needs.

At the first business subcommittee meeting, members discussed their own personal agendas. The subcommittee chair, one of the relocated corporate leaders, declared that his relocated employees were very 'unhappy with the schools'. The Chamber assigned a support staff member who attended all business subcommittee meetings. This staffer warned the

chair that 'employees' kids are not the major concern of the Task Force'. The owner of a small business worried about dropouts. The other relocated member was especially interested in better science and technical programs in schools.

Soon, however, the business subcommittee began to systematically discuss what is expected and needed from young workers. Subcommittee members expressed dissatisfaction with, as one member put it, the 'products' of the schools. These products were workers with disappointing and troublesome traits. The most troubling were 'immaturity' 'failure to show up on time', and the sense that workers believe owners 'owe them something'. Mentioned last were academic skills like reading, writing, and computing. The traits that employers most wanted to see in prospective employees were 'maturity', 'pride in workmanship', 'interest in being part of the company', 'trainability', 'responsibility', 'social discipline that respects and understands authority', 'sensitivity towards others', 'realistic expectations of work and employers', and better oral and writing skills. Because there was only one owner of a small business on the subcommittee, the members projected that small business would account for a large proportion of new jobs, members agreed to hold a one-time meeting with selected owners and executives of small businesses.

The next subcommittee meeting included the top managers and owners of 24 small businesses. The chief officer of an employment agency also attended and remarked to one of the researchers that the needs of many small business people were for 'low skill, entry level workers' but 'there just aren't enough'. This theme was repeated by others at the meeting who were well aware of the reported 3% unemployment rate in Sunbelt City and county. The key comments which emerged from the small business subcommittee meeting included:

> Young people coming out of high school have too many choices and 'can go their own way'.
>
> It's like they have their own unions 'cause they can leave one job and just go down the street' to find another.
>
> There is a lack of motivation which isn't being taught in the schools.
>
> Kids seem to think they can get rich quick.
>
> You can't find workers willing to be trained.
>
> They need to learn to do what people tell them to.

Other remarks were concerned with personal appearance, adaptability, and doing more than 'just being there'. The employment officer complained that he had the applications of 100 personnel specialists but could not find a fork lift driver; 'all kids are bring pushed to go to college', he grumbled; vocational skills are being 'downgraded'. The owner of an air conditioner installation and service company agreed by saying that education 'has gotta find a way to put honor back in the blue collar'. The chair of the business subcommittee responded that many of the problems were due to the fact that there was 'no centralized vocational high school in Sunbelt City – kids are in esoteric classes where they get no motivation'. A small business owner added that 'vocational education could be used to combat dropouts'.

The first few meetings confirmed that 'common sense' notions that we, as researchers, had expected to observe. Business leaders said they wanted stronger basic academic skills, but repeatedly, and more emphatically, described deficiencies in student or worker behavioral traits. In essence, these leaders reported being faced with discipline problems during a period of tight labor markets, never a comfortable position for business owners (Ramsey 1977, Edwards 1979, Braddock and McPartland 1987). In this finding, our original hunch about what business leaders 'really' wanted was confirmed and became part of the data (Spector and Kitsuse 1987: 63). The question was, now that members agreed on a common definition of 'the problem' with education, where would their deliberations lead them? Vocational education soon became the pivotal issue around which discussion and debate swirled.

Reconstructing the 'real' problem of secondary education

Based on the small business executives' remarks, the chair began to reshape the definition of the problem with education. It was not education *per se* that was a problem. Rather the problem was that non-college bound high school students were learning neither the educational skills nor the discipline needed for entry level jobs. His claims-making activity involved saying that 'vo-tech [vocational-technical] kids are too spread out' among the district's ten high schools and may 'distract college bound kids in, say, social studies'. He summed up by suggesting that such students 'may be better off in a separate school'. The Chamber staff member remarked that the centralization of vocational education 'gets around to race' because it 'may lead to the resegregation of black and whites'. The chair, however, continued his tack, and declared that 'pride must be put back in vo-tech education'.

This meeting recast the claims-making activities of the group. The problem was no longer secondary education in general, but the population of low-income and minority youngsters who might be socialized as productive workers via a centralized vocational education high school. A subtext was emerging concerning the potential race and social class resegregation of the school district. The importance of this subtext was later confirmed by informants who had been Task Force members.

The business subcommittee expressed a continuing need to learn the opinions of the broader Sunbelt City business community and became engaged in designing a survey of all Chamber members, inquiring about their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with new hirees, the secondary school system, the community college, vocational education, and so on. The next few subcommittee meetings focused on survey design, but were also characterized by serious discussions of vocational education, its potential centralization, and ways to make it more appealing to students.

The chair, at the close of one subcommittee meeting, declared that his relocated employees were 'livid' about the schools. At subsequent subcommittee meetings, the chair, usually informally before or after a session, made remarks such as his 'employees blame the new superintendent for busing', and that he knew he 'could not change busing'. The chair stated his final remarks on this issue at the end of a session with an order to the research team 'Sociologists, put your pencils down!' He then asserted that his company wanted 'everyone' who was presently sitting on the school board and running for re-election in the upcoming election 'thrown off'. He concluded with the view that his 'employees aren't opposed to busing; they just don't like what's going on in the classroom; it's disgusting!'[3]

The enlargement of the grounds statement

The business subcommittee prepared, disseminated, and analyzed the results of its survey over a three-month period. Simultaneously, the general Task Force membership met and were addressed by invited experts who discussed various ways of understanding the problem with education. As these discussions progressed, the grounds statement began to change and expand.

A number of Task Force members expressed a great deal of concern about dropouts. An adult literacy expert showed the National Alliance for Business film 'The 4th R: Readiness to Work' which heavily supports business involvement in education. The film emphasizes the fact that minority students will make up a large portion of the workforce by the year 2000. The film also implies that if these youngsters are undereducated and do not find good jobs, social chaos will occur.

At a later meeting, the representative of the state Employment Security Commission projected the numbers of new workers needed by the year 2000 and discussed the preparation they will need. He pointed out that non-white and immigrant workers will constitute 53% of the workforce by the turn of the century. Additionally, he reported that greater use of temporary workers and contracting-out is expected. He predicted 'growing income divisions and expanded wage inequalities'.

Task Force members, especially educators, began to emphasize the role of low income children, their parents, and dropouts in creating the alleged problem. The core message of the National Alliance of Business film was referenced as justification for expanding the grounds statement. Now that numbers of minorities had been counted, their expansion estimated, and the numbers of future jobs had been counted and the workforce expansion measured, a new tag line could be attached to the grounds statement at the local level: 'If we don't see to it that low-income and minority children are better educated, there will be not only a shortage of skilled workers which hinders the competitiveness of US business, but there is also the potential for social upheaval.'

Low income children and their parents as the 'real' problem

Further Task Force meetings featured more expert analyses and formal presentations by local educators, who elaborately described and defended district programs. Discussions were frequently punctuated by the ranking official of the school district emphasizing 'at-risk kids' and 'children having children'. These youngsters watch too much television which 'leads to mindlessness and crime', he insisted. As a result, many drop out and 'become a drag on society'. The challenge was, the school district official summarized, 'to bring these children back into the mainstream' and give them the 'attitudes and skills' which would help them.

At a subsequent meeting, a Task Force member who is a public school teacher and head of the Teacher's Association gave a talk about the importance of parents to the child's educational success. In a passionate voice he asserted that it is 'the lack of parental involvement' that gives education all of its problems. These youngsters drop out and 'diminish the quality of life' for everyone. All of us need 'locks on our doors'. He exhorted everyone to 'join hands' to solve this 'debilitating, ruinous problem which leads to relentless corrosion'. The family is the 'crux of the problem'. The director of the Chamber remarked that 'we're talking about major, major social problems'. He speculated that 'the only way' to deal with problems of this magnitude may be to follow the example of Israel where 'there are programs which take very small children from their families and raise them in collective situations and then return them to their families'. The chair of the Task Force observed that during his trip to China he was impressed by the 'discipline' of very young, collectively-organized children. 'Of course, that's too regimented', he quickly added. The seed had been planted, however, and extended discussions of early childhood intervention, education, and care continued at subsequent meetings.

The educators and their invited experts placed a great deal of emphasis on the positive features of existing public education processes, programs and personnel. Simultaneously, blame for problems was placed on low-income and minority students and their parents who allegedly impeded the educational process. Thus school personnel, responding to the allegations which formed the Task Force in the first place – that their programs created problems for employers' competitive ability – countered with claims that low-income families were the real problem.

During this period, which lasted through three Task Force meetings, business

subcommittee members could contribute little since they needed the data from their survey to show that centralized vocational education was the proper solution. Moreover, business subcommittee members had already identified the problematic population of students which was the topic of much of the discussion. All Task Force members publicly agreed that low-income families were the problem. Conflict, however, was soon to erupt, conflict which would pit educators and business leaders against one another.

The subversion of centralized vocational education

The business subcommittee met for the last time, following the tabulation of their survey data. The return rate was very low (10.8%), causing some confusion among members. More importantly, only about half the respondents reporting being dissatisfied with new workers who were high school graduates; the other half were satisfied. Subcommittee members were not sure how to interpret these results until the small business owner pointed out that the survey did not cover the unemployed. Visibly brightening, the Chamber staff member offered a new interpretation of the data. The employees who are hired 'represent a small number of those who are out there.' Compared to the unemployed, these workers have been carefully screened. Despite the screening process, employers 'are still only 50% satisfied.' This interpretation seemed to prove the survey produced evidence indicting the existing vocational education programs dispersed throughout the district's ten high schools.

Presentation of the survey results to the entire Task Force membership was a full-dress affair, complete with video screen, video technician, and statistician accompanying the business subcommittee members to help portray, explain and interpret results. Members of the local press attended. The chair of the business sub-committee, after summing up the results, told the educators that the respondents 'aren't happy with your training or with the results of your training'. Other members of the business subcommittee discussed a centralized vocational education high school where students would learn good attitudes and work habits as well as skills, and argued that the image of vocational education high schools as a dumping ground must be overturned.

Although many educators looked tense and upset, the ranking official of Sunbelt School District appeared very calm even, at times, tipping his chair back and hooking his thumbs to his lapels. At other times, he casually leaned forward and fondled a small brochure on the conference table. The chair of the business sub-committee finished the presentation by demanding: 'Something must be done . . . We want action . . . the cost to the American public and to Sunbelt City [of dropouts and undereducated high school graduates] is too great . . . we'll stay with the press and TV . . . we're prepared to carry on with our demands!'

The ranking official of Sunbelt School District praised the business sub-committee's efforts and clear communication. But he countered their claims by saying that in fact, many business leaders were satisfied with the existing programs. That very evening, he continued, 1200 vocational education students in a retail-oriented program were to be saluted by business people at a major event in the city; the official dramatically waved the program for the evening's activities. The official then shifted again to the dropout 'problem', to the high school graduates who do not go on to post-high school education, and finally to the widening gap between 'the haves and have-nots' in Sunbelt City and the US. 'We didn't learn from the blow-ups of the sixties', he warned.

The business sub-committee most assuredly did not 'win' the day. The school district

official pre-empted the force of the former's presentation by revealing a major vocational education success and then hammered away at his familiar theme, that the problem was low income and minority children/parents. At this point there was consensus about the definition of 'the problem'. Both sides agreed that disadvantaged youngsters and their parents are the crux of the issue. The solution – or nature of needed school (or pupil) reforms – remained very much under contention, however.

The chair of the business subcommittee later angrily complained to one of the researchers that the business subcommittee's Chamber support man should have alerted him to the school district's successful vocational education program. He now believed that the Chamber was not entirely the ally of business but had its own 'program'. Rather than dealing with pressing issues, he felt the Chamber was most interested in 'attracting and keeping [business] people here'. The chair also mentioned that his relocated employees, numbering more than half of the population of his large firm, thought that Sunbelt City schools were 'terrible'. He, personally, wished to see the Sunbelt School District geographically divided in half, which would mean shorter bus rides.

Outside experts and the emergence of a rival solution

Further speakers at Task Force meetings included experts from outside the local area. One featured speaker was a former governor who is active in educational reform at the national level. He twice repeated the earlier, shorter version of the grounds statement: good education is necessary for 'global strength'. The governor also promoted the expansion of education for four-year olds, especially those who are disadvantaged and 'don't get it at home'. A member of the business subcommittee attempted to emphasize the absence of centralized vocational education as the problem, and added that if there were only one or two vocational education high schools in Sunbelt City, business could be more effectively donate the necessary 'technology and expertise'. The ex-governor saw some merit in the argument but added that focusing on current technology 'neglects how technology changes too fast, and then what will the kids do [with their outmoded skills']'?

The chair of the State Board of Education also made a presentation to the Task Force. He emphasized the need for early education of disadvantaged children, including three-year olds, to bring them up to 'parity'. With a projected dropout rate of 40%, the key was to reach disadvantaged children early – these youngsters are creating 'chaos in our schools' and will eventually cost millions of dollars in social costs. He repeated the governor's point about the drawbacks of teaching narrow skills such as those learned in a centralized vocational education program.

Not only had the business subcommittee been defeated on presentation day, subsequent meetings were dominated by experts who placed heavy emphasis on Early Childhood Education which became the principal competing 'solution' to the problems in schools.

Throughout the final stages of the Task Force deliberations business leaders kept inserting remarks about the need for centralized vocational education. The ranking school district official, however, forcefully finessed each attempt by first reiterating the social and curricular drawbacks of centralized vocational education, and by consistently repeating the shortcomings of a particular population of students. The numbers of low income youngsters were expanding, he insisted, 'it's going to get worse!' Concerning these students, the official added, 'if there were a thousand jobs available and a thousand kids to fill them it would do no good'. These children simply 'don't have the work ethic'.

Hence, employers will be 'getting the lowest of the low'. The state school board member on the Task Force backed this analysis, noted that high and low income workers are getting 'further and further apart' and pleaded 'poverty must be stressed in the Report'.

The Report

The elaborated grounds statement defining the education problem was repeated in the Report. After particular reference was made to students who are illiterate, semi-literate, or dropouts, the Report insisted that 'As the US struggles to compete in global economic markets, the nation can ill afford such a flagrant waste of human resources'. The nearly 50-page document contained frequent references to impoverished families, and most solutions to this problem accentuated Early Childhood Education. References to 'selectively centralizing' some vocational education courses were buried among several dozen other recommendations. The general theme was that the children in poor families needed to be resocialized through the educational system, and the earlier the better.

The business leaders who initially backed Chamber efforts to form the Task Force – leaders who vociferously identified the alleged problem as de-centralized vocational education and promoted the solution of centralized vocational education – were ultimately rejected. While the Report acknowledged that current vocational education programs could be improved, it emphasized the view that the real problem is the low income and minority children populating both the schools and the existing vocational education programs. These 'at-risk' youngsters lack the role-modeling, values and social discipline needed to either acquire school knowledge or diligently perform on the job.

Discussion

Our case study illuminates the process by which active community forces dynamically interact to shape school reform. By closely recording the activities and opinions of the community leaders involved in the Task Force, we learned how the definition of 'the problem' in secondary education shifted from lack of centralized vocational education for low income students to the shortcomings of low income students and their families. With this shift came a shift in 'the solution' from a centralized vocational-high school to the formation of Early Childhood Education programs.

The flow of influence between contending groups

The key question in this study is: how did a group of business leaders powerful enough to generate the formation of the Task Force fail to achieve their goals? The Task Force data offer three clues to answering this question.

First the dramatic counter evidence offered by the ranking Sunbelt City school official on the presentation day of the business subcommittee's survey results did not help the business leaders' cause. This educator's skillful elaboration of the prevailing grounds statement was even more influential. After adopting the business community's language and general concerns, he was joined by other educators in using business leaders' own suggestions to elaborating the problem. Thus, concern over the schools' role in creating socialized young workers was transferred into an assertion that low-income students

create problems in schools. The case data reveal how one community group influences another when a topic is identified and members hold divergent views (cf., Barley *et al.* 1989). Though the educators initially appeared to have been 'enculturated' into the business leaders' views, they were actually using the business model to launch their own arguments. This is at odds with the results expected by Spector and Kitsuse (1987: 8) who predict that the group which adopts the language of a competing group will not achieve its goals.

Second, some key business Task Force members became persuaded that the educators' goals were worthy. We learned, for example, that between twelve and fifteen phone calls took place between the ranking school district official and the chair of the business subcommittee. One of the researchers interviewed the chair of the business subcommittee following the publication of the Report. When asked about the relative neglect of vocational education in the Report, the chair grimaced, appeared embarrased, and remarked that the ranking school district official 'impressed me' with his argument that, when it comes to socializing low income children social 'integration is important for learning middle class values' in order to produce some 'success stories'. Separating low income students from the mainstream 'is not such a good idea'.

Third, using a strategy of hammering away at the theme of the alleged defects of low income families, educators on the Task Force were able to marshal various experts to speak and to elicit and receive strong support for Early Childhood Education. In this way they deflected attention away from centralized vocational education.

The local educators, addressing the Task Force, were primarily concerned with defending the Sunbelt City school system, presenting evidence of the relative success of the system as a whole and of various special programs which the school district offers – including the currently dispersed vocational education program. Their unspoken agenda – confirmed in subsequent interviews with Task Force participants – was to avoid any reform changes which might lead to the resegregation of the schools. In their attempts to keep the upper hand in this battle, however, educators had to resort to a tactic which contains a glaring irony. In order to attempt to reject and then subvert the claims and efforts of business people to install concentrated vocational education programs, educators repeatedly told the Task Force that the primary reason why centralized vocational education could not solve the problem is that low income and minority children and their parents are themselves the problem.

Paradoxically, then, educators utilized a poor-as-deviant argument to preserve a desegregated schools system valued primarily because it attempts to treat all children as equal and provide an escape path for the poor. In the contest over the causes and solutions of 'the problem' facing Sunbelt City schools, educators achieved their goals by successfully dodging the centralized vocational education bullet with its resegregation implications, yet managed to maintain cordial relations with the business community on which they depend for technical and financial support. Cordial relations with the business community were purchased, however, by recasting the poor and their children as the real source of school failures.

In this case, in this locale, as this moment in history, particular business leaders did not achieve their goals as they understood them. The implicit goal of some of the members of the business subcommittee – the partial resegregation of the schools – would have to wait at least until the next school board election.

Conclusion

In a very real sense, the expanded grounds statement – that undereducated low income and minority students jeopardize not only the competitive position of US business in the global economy but the foundations of society itself – is rapidly becoming 'taken for granted'. Within the context of continuing productivity problems, a labor shortage, and growing numbers of the poor, the statement is laden with cherished, symbolic values such as worldwide US economic leadership, quality education, and finally, concerns about threats to US security. The statement is political, a mechanism that serves to direct our attention toward one particulr set of social problems and away from other issues which may be just as troubling.

There are clear paths for further research now that the expanded grounds statement is illuminated. Most obvious, educational reform and policy-making activities need to be critically re-analyzed by bracketing and viewing with skepticism the linguistic and symbolic baggage of the grounds statement concerning the need for school reform. We suspect, in other words, that policy-makers, and even social scientists, have not been immune to the non-critical acceptance of the business – oriented statement. Quite possibly it is the uncritical acceptance of this grounds statement that is responsible for the lack of lasting positive effects from reforms adopted since the release of *A Nation at Risk* (Elmore and McLaughlin 1988, Kearns and Doyle 1988, Perry 1988). If important elements in the prevailing grounds statement distort reality, reforms which flow from its are unlikely to succeed.

Another research direction worthy of pursuit is an analysis of the degree to which educators are caught in the middle between two social classes. Do business leaders want schools to simply socialize the burgeoning population of improverished youngsters to accept low paying jobs in the direct opposition to the opportunity themes of equity-oriented rhetoric? Is there really an anti-youth movement afoot (Best 1987)? To what exent do demands from business leaders contradict the expressed goals of public education in a democratic society? To what extent do educators consciously fend off these demands, if at all?

Underlying the rhetoric of school reform in the US, is a broader theme, one linked to the growth of poverty and the issue of race. In a rather ambiguous statement, but one which captures the essence of this emerging theme, John L. Clendenin, CEO of Bell South declared:

> Businesses like mine need lots of people. We can't afford to have one-third of the people in this country in the underclass. If we don't do something soon, we'll be in a heap of trouble. (quoted in Lopez 1989).

Anxiety about the possibility that this 'heap of trouble' would involve widespread 'social chaos' arose occasionally at Task Force meetings. And the theme of potential social unrest has surfaced elsewhere in the popular press (e.g., Hagemeyer 1988, Erlich 1988). One educator warns, for instance, that if whites keep getting 'top-tier jobs, it is a recipe for social dynamite' (quoted in Raspberry 1988).

The disenfranchised children of poverty may already be engaging in their own social movement of sorts. By dropping out of school and 'job hopping' as if 'they have their own union', they may be engaged in an inarticulate claims-making activity of their own (Critchlow 1986, Mickelson 1990, Weis 1985). They may well be creating the volatile situation suggested by Horowitz and Liebowitz (1968), and predicted by many business people and educators. In short, dropouts and 'undereducated' high school graduates may be engaged in a type of political activity, even if non-collectve at this point, which may give rise to serious class struggle (Shaw 1987, Willis 1977).

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Notes

1. There is evidence that in many cases schools do not, in fact, successfully reproduce compliant workers. The resistance literature (Apple and Weis 1983, Giroux 1983, Weis 1985, Willis 1977) argues that while schools may be designed to, among other things, reproduce the social division of labor, working class people and minorities often resist this. Liston's (1988) critique of radical accounts of schooling provides a good summary and analysis of this argument.
2. We also attended other public meetings relevant to our topic (e.g., school board meetings) and conducted semi-structured interviews with key members of the Task Force after deliberations were completed and the Report was issued. Finally, we collected many local reports and documents from the community college, university, the Chamber of Commerce, and other groups and agencies associated with child care, literacy, labor markets, and human resources.
3. We reconstructed our notes in the classic spot to accomplish such a task, a nearby employees' restroom.

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POLITICS OF EDUCATION ASSOCIATION YEARBOOK 1989, 137–151

Economic rationalism and the politics of education in Australia

Ian Birch and Don Smart
University of Western Australia and Murdoch University

The last several decades have witnessed a quickening tempo of change and increasing turbulence in the politics of Australian education. Recent changes are driven by, or at least associated with, a gradual integration of the global economy and the commitment of Australian political leaders to resolve domestic economic problems and, make the nation 'internationally competitive'. Since the Second World War, the Australian federal government in Canberra has taken over income-taxing power from the states and gradually exercised the 'power of the purse' to increase funding and extend federal involvement in education. This long term trend has been slowed under the current Labor government, where the ascendancy of neo-conservative economic rationalist thinking, together with fears about Australia's growing international debt and the non-competitiveness of the labour force, has led to contradictory educational policies (Smart 1987). Perhaps the best examples of contradictory tendency are in the area of regulatory controls over school programs and operations. On the one hand, Canberra is pushing for increased privatization and deregulation of higher education institutions and the forgoing of stronger links between education institutions and the economy. On the other hand, intrusive centralized policy from Canberra is used as a key strategy for promoting these outcomes.

This chapter addresses significant topics in the politics of education that will shape Australian secondary education into the twenty-first century. Foremost are transformations in the polity of Australian education, including the federal restructuring of the education portfolio, the decentralization and centralization of state education systems and the increased politicization of the educational policy process. Efforts by the government to relate education to national economic needs are reflected in attempts to reform curriculum at both the federal and state levels and in the growing debate about secondary school assessment and certification. Finally, in a country where nearly 30% of all students attend private schools, the issue of federal and state aid to private schools is always present.

Transformations in the polity of Australian education

Largely because of differences in their educational funding mechanisms, education policy responses by the federal governments of Australia and the United States are likely to continue to diverge into the twenty-first century. Clark and Astuto (1987) have noted the dramatic diminution in the federal role in the United States under the Reagan

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administration and the substitution of the 'bully pulpit' for dollars and categorical programs. By contrast, under the Hawke Labor Government since 1983 – especially under the forceful new education minister John Dawkins – the Australian government has increased its involvement in education policy and pressed for stronger linkages between the education sector and the business, employment and training sectors. In this section, we discuss four changes in the polity of Australian education: the federal restructuring of the education portfolio; restructuring of higher education; state efforts at decentralizing the highly centralized state education systems; and the growing politicization of the education policy process.

Federal restructuring of the education portfolio

A major action taken by the federal government to link education more closely to national economic needs was the amalgamation in 1987 of the Departments of Education and Youth Affairs with the Department of Employment and Training to create a new Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET). This step was taken for two reasons. First, it reflected the desire of Bob Hawke to have fewer but larger ministries. The mega-ministry concept, driven by concerns for administrative efficiency and economic policy co-ordination, has led to many mergers. Education was no exception.

Second, joining education with employment and training, and especially the deliberate placement of 'employment' before 'education' in the title of the new department, were responses to the belief that outcomes from the compulsory education system are not matched to the need of the national economy. Statistics on the high rate of unemployment among youth and the country's relatively low retention rates in upper secondary and tertiary education reinforced generally held views, particularly among industrialists, that the present educational system was inadequate.

Not everyone supported the view that the Australian education system was performing poorly, however. The government-appointed Quality of Education Review Committee (1985), for example, asserted that there was no evidence to show that cognitive outcomes had improved or worsened over the fifteen years prior to 1985. Nevertheless, their report did note Australia's changing economic status including the downturn in economic growth, the rise in youth unemployment, the deterioration in the labor market and the obsolete nature of education and training for a post-industrial economy. While these economic issues were mentioned only in passing in that report, these matters soon came to dominate government thinking. As a result, the polity of Australian education was restructured to break down the political isolation of the Department of Education and place it in the context of employment, productivity and training.

The principal characteristic of this reform in polity is to treat education not as something of itself but as education for economic development. In his message of welcome to the members of the new department, Minister Dawkins wrote

> Employment has been placed first in the title [of the department] because it represents our ultimate objective – to help people, particularly the young, get the best job possible. This is not only in their best interests as individuals, it is also an important national objective if we are to have a vibrant economy. This means the Department will play a central role in gearing Australia to meet the new economic challenges of the late twentieth Century. I look forward to working with you on this very important task. (DEET News, No. 1, 26 August 1987)

To this end the government has highlighted a number of priorities including:

- increasing participation in education and retention rates;
- improving the quality of education;
- emphasizing skills training;
- involving the private sector in skills education;
- increasing the productivity of education and training resources.

These priorities place a heavy emphasis on secondary education and particularly its capacity in the post-compulsory school years to reverse national and personal disadvantage.

The decision of the federal government to link educational outcomes to national productivity in such a direct manner faces several challenges. The first is the credibility of the federal commitment. The government's actions have shocked many purists in education, particularly in the tertiary sphere, where resistance to this productivity approach is high. Minister Dawkins envisages the development of more entrepreneurial tertiary institutions, competing with each other for scarce research and other resources and being rewarded for performance measured in the context of national productivity. In the long run, the extent to which succeeding governments remain determined to have education justify itself in productivity terms will largely determine the degree to which the new role for education will be accepted.

A second challenge posed by the federal structural reform is the complexity of its administration. The new department has a huge staff of over 10,000. Organizing operational units in a department of this size and restructuring units from the older constituent agencies inevitably creates problems of task clarity and staff morale.

Third, educators are accustomed to playing a major role in educational policy-making at the national level in Australian education through their participation on commissions and committees appointed by government. That role has been significantly reduced through this restructuring as most of those bodies have been dissolved or incorporated into the new structure. The overarching policy advice will now come from a board on which educators serve as a minority, with industry, union and other public representatives being the majority. This loss of formal power has fueled suspicion regarding the educational motives of the government.

Finally, the implementation and consolidation of this major policy change by other levels of government will take time and is uncertain. In a federal system of government, inter-governmental persuasion is often more important than formal authority (particularly in an area like education where the national government is not regarded as having a constitutional power). While no state government has yet aligned its own governance policy with that of the national government, all state governments face a *de facto* obligation to implement the national government's priorities.

A reform of the magnitude described here is difficult to appraise. Assessment of its impact will only be possible as we approach the year 2000. It is certainly the case that education in Australia, particularly secondary education, will be increasingly guided by national economic considerations. Education and employment are being joined to ensure that educational outcomes are related to employment needs. Alignment of education and training will avoid the artificial, if not elitist, distinction made between the two and enable the government to rationalize and integrate Australia's educational services.

Restructuring higher education

In higher education, Dawkins' intervention has been rapid and profound. Since July 1987,

he has used the political leverage of ministerial 'discussion papers' and the total federal control of higher education funding to force a major restructuring. In trying to make the institutions more responsive to the needs of the economy, he has:

- imposed 'national' economic and research priorities;
- set in process a series of institutional mergers aimed at reducing the total number of institutions by one-half;
- restructured the basis of research funding by abolishing the 'binary' distinction between universities and colleges and creating a 'unitary national system';
- insisted that the institutions will enroll 50% more students by 2001;
- forced the institutions to rapidly expand student places in areas of 'national economic need' such as business, accounting, engineering and computing (Smart, 1989).

Given the limited availability of additional federal funds to support these new initiatives, Dawkins has sought to increase the privatization of Australia's universities and colleges. Privatization measures include: reintroducing tuition fees (which were abolished in 1974); encouraging recruitment of full-fee paying overseas students; encouraging collaborative research with industry; fostering the development of a more entrepreneurial style of operation and management in the institutions; and tacitly supporting the creation of Bond University, Australia's first private institution of higher education (Harman 1989).

Decentralization of centralized state education systems

Historically, Australian public education's administration and control has been characterized by strong state education systems centralized in departments of education based in the state capitals (Smart 1988). These bodies, established in the late nineteenth century, have been remarkably enduring structures. They have served well in building schools throughout this sparsely settled country; providing centralized training, appointment, inspection, transfer, promotion and payment of teachers; and prescribing the uniform curricula, syllabi, and external final examination of its students. Administered centrally and funded centrally (not by local property tax), Australian public schools have never developed a tradition of local control or strong parent and community participation.

While there have been periodic criticisms of this highly centralized approach to school administration and control, it was not until the emergence of the federal Schools Commission in the 1970s that the status quo came under serious challenge. The policies and dollars of the new Schools Commission in Canberra challenged the monolithic control of state departments and gave strong encouragement to curriculum diversity and to such innovations as school-based curriculum and decision-making, and 'devolution of responsibility' to the schools.

Thus, by 1980, Harman could argue that a review of the Australian literature and reports on educational administration revealed two key themes:

> One is the desirability of a much higher degree of decentralization or devolution in control, and the other is the need for much broader community and professional participation in policy-making and governance.

Modest efforts to decentralize various state departments head offices' control have been made over the years but most are appropriately interpreted as 'token'. Regional offices created by the state departments, for example, have generally become another layer of bureaucracy rather than mechanisms for substantial devolution of control. Recently, however, Victoria and Western Australia have addressed the issue with more substantial

reform efforts (Smart 1988). Both of these states have made serious efforts to break the cast-iron grip of the 'center' by major structural reforms and by the transfer of significant functions, resources and personnel from the state to the local school and district levels. It is still too early to tell whether these efforts will succeed. Early assessments suggest that there are already signs of reassertion of central control. Both the remarkable tenacity of state systems for centralized control and the fact that the real pressures for devolution of control have come from state politicians rather than from grassroots community interests make one skeptical of the ultimate likelihood of a genuine reduction in state department dominance.

Attempts at reducing centralized policy control in the state departments are accompanied by a conscious effort in some states, notably Victoria and Western Australia, to strengthen the capacity of individual schools to manage their own affairs free from external authority. School councils, composed of teacher, parent and student representatives were relatively rare a few years ago, but are fairly common in most state systems today. In Western Australia, for example, each school is now required to establish a school-based decision-making group, and that group is charged with providing a long-term school development plan.

Victoria is a state with a history of experimentation in local school management. Since the radical decentralization reforms of 1984, Victoria's school councils have had the power to determine the educational policies and budgets of their schools within guidelines provided by the government (Caldwell 1988). Caldwell and Spinks (1988) recently developed a model of the 'self-managing school' as a result of extensive trialling in Tasmania and Victoria. This model has been widely publicized throughout Australia and in North America and has become the centerpiece of an extensive professional development program in several Australian states. Still in its infancy, management will be a major issue in Australian education policy over the coming decade.

Increasing politicization of the education policy process

Over the past decade politicians have become increasingly involved in education policy at both the federal and state levels. Their expanded influence has come at the expense of the traditional controls exercised by education professionals and the bureaucracy. While the permanent public service heads of state departments of education (directors-general or chief executive officers whose roles are similar to chief state school officers in the United States) were once virtually supreme, with secure long-term policy controls, that is no longer the case today (Harman *et al.* 1987). Dissatisfied with the quality of education and the pace of educational reform, and assailed by a growing array of assertive interest groups, politically appointed ministers have increasingly taken the policy reins into their own hands. While removal (or a less direct 'lateral arabesque') of a director-general was almost unheard of a decade ago, such actions are commonplace these days. Australia has a new generation of education ministers who, like 'education reform' governors in the United States, have sought to make their name by taking control of education policy and seeking the rapid reform of matters as diverse as administrative structure, educational certification, performance indicators, and curriculum content and delivery. Ministers such as Bob Pearce in Western Australia and Terry Metherell in New South Wales are examples of this increasingly politicized style. However desirable the stability and professional expertise of the previous model might be, there is no evidence that a retreat from this electorally and economically-driven politicization and turbulence in education policy will occur in the near future.

State and federal curriculum reform

A national curriculum?

The changing nature of federal-state relations in Australian education is most dramatically seen in the area of curriculum. Of all educational undertakings, the strongest traditional prerogative of the states has been the determination of curriculum content, design and development. That is not to say that curriculum is not a matter of national concern. To the contrary, federal level concern with curriculum was formalized in the establishment of the federal Curriculum Development Center (CDC) in 1973. That federal interest is uncertain is evidenced in the demise of the CDC as a response to federal funding reductions in 1981, its resurrection by the Hawke Government in 1983 and the final removal of its life support system in 1989. Throughout its turbulent life, the CDC's effectiveness depended on participation by the states. Even at the peak of its power, the CDC was unable to implement a national curriculum over the objections of state agencies. The Queensland government, for example, was able to ban two curriculum programs (SEMP and MACOS) which had been either developed in or promoted by the CDC, even though state leaders had actively participated in the CDC curriculum development process.

The demise of the CDC in 1989 should not be taken as a sign that the Commonwealth Government has relinquished its interest in the establishment of a national curriculum. The government continues to pursue a national curriculum program for Australian education by both indirect and direct means. A strong example of direct action can be seen in events following governmental adoption of a National Policy on Languages Report in 1987. At that time, government funds were allocated for the preparation of curriculum and syllabus materials based on an understanding that one or two states would develop materials for all Australian schools. State curriculum developers are expected to use a nationwide reference group in order to maintain a national focus and to accommodate particular states' needs within the national framework. The extent to which this process will be more successful than the CDC remains to be seen. With high profile federal government involvement in promoting a national consensus, however, it may well be the first subject area to have a national curriculum.

The argument for a national school curriculum was set forth by Minister Dawkins in May 1988 in *Strengthening Australia's Schools: A Consideration of the Focus and Content of Schooling*. Set in the context of his government's drive to maximize the effort in education in support of national economic development, Dawkins argues for a common curriculum framework oriented to such objectives as greater international export competitiveness, improved productivity and the development of skills-based industries. While the document affirms that school policy-making lies in the constitutional domain of the states, it also defends the federal role in promoting the national interest and demanding effective use of national resources to meet national goals. Dawkins concludes that the fundamental purposes of education can only be addressed by way of 'a coherent curriculum appropriate to contemporary social and economic needs'.

In advocating the development of a national curriculum, the Minister places considerable weight on the problem of school to school itinerancy (called transiency in the US). Several Australian studies suggest that itinerancy is likely to lead to cumulative deficits in terms of school achievement, with children crossing state system borders the most seriously affected (Birch 1985, Collins and Coulter 1974). The Minister cites these research findings for suggesting that the implementation of a national curriculum would

offset the disadvantage suffered by mobile families, particularly those crossing state boundaries. The cost of preparing such curricula will be considerable, even if only priority curriculum areas are targeted. Nevertheless, the Minister has made it clear that the states are expected to fund the curriculum development work. The question of whether a national curriculum is the most efficient way of tackling the itinerancy issue is, therefore, confounded with the issue of who should bear the cost of generating the new curriculum materials.

The extent to which the national curriculum issues will change the balance of power between federal and state education policy makers depends on a number of factors. On the federal side the two key questions are first whether the current commitment to 'education-for-economic development' can be maintained; and second whether a strong minister such as Dawkins (who contrast quite starkly with his predecessor) will be on hand to implement new federal policies (Smart 1989). Other key stakeholders in the decision-making process also need to be considered, especially the federal opposition parties, the states and the influential educational pressure groups.

Consider, for example, the two opposition parties which, in coalition, would form a new federal government, if successful at the polls. The coalition's policy would favor national initiatives in development in curriculum, student assessment and teacher education. 'Excellence' and 'improvement' are also key words in its policy statement of December 1988, which asserts that Australian schools and curricula must hold their own in terms of international competition and comparisons. In addition, they propose a National Standards Monitoring Program that would impinge directly on curriculum, assessment and teacher education, as well as another federal inquiry into teacher education. Although advanced from a different ideological perspective, and less direct or comprehensive than the approach of the Hawke Labor Government, this coalition policy concurs in recommending substantially more federal involvement in education than the anti-centralist coalition parties have traditionally supported.

Formal state participation in the national curriculum policy development has come through the Australian Education Council (AEC) whose membership includes the state and federal education ministers. The Council's approach to the national curriculum proposals was to conduct a curriculum mapping exercise undertaken at both a general level and of mathematics in particular. As a consequence of that exercise, the AEC has decided to pursue common curricula wherever possible, provided the inherent right of the states to control education is not interfered with – in other words, a common curriculum rather than a national curriculum. Nevertheless, it has accepted frameworks for national curriculum development in the fields of Languages other than English, and for mathematics, English literacy, English as a second language, technology and science.

According to the federal minister for education, key pressure groups such as the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the National Council of Independent Schools, the Independent Teachers' Federation of Australia, the Australian High Schools' Principals Association and the National Catholic Education Council have agreed to 'participate in the development of national goals and priorities to strengthen the role and performance of Australia's schools' (Media Release 145/188, 24 July 1988). Significant omissions from the minister's list are the major government school teachers' unions and parent bodies. Furthermore, some of the key independent school groups, named as participating by the minister, have been fairly hostile to much of what he has so far proposed.

There is little doubt that the federal minister is attempting to take some of the sting out of the frequent attacks on public education and is committing the Commonwealth Government to a part in promoting and maintaining an efficient public sector. It is

unlikely that he will be able to persuade the states to do much more than garnish their present systems with some semblance of commonality in curriculum, assessment and teacher education, especially as he seems unwilling to provide additional federal funds for the purpose and given that the argument about itinerancy is not a strong one. If he does succeed, despite the weight of state resistance, the history of federal-state relations in Australian schools policy will need to be re-written.

A case study in state curriculum reform

The federal government's attempts to define and implement a national curriculum will also be affected by parallel activities at the state level. In Western Australia, for example, compulsory secondary education has undergone a major curriculum reform in the past five years. This 1980s reform was based on the notion that curricula must consider not only subject matter and pedagogy, but also the needs and development of the individual student. The reform began in 1983, when a new Labor Government came to power in Western Australia. The new government questioned the relevance of existing patterns and provisions for all compulsory education. Reform attention was concentrated on the secondary sector, raising to the center of attention technology in secondary education, the employment of young people when they completed compulsory education, and the plight of students from minority group families in the community. To meet the demands of the situation, the government appointed a Committee of Enquiry (a common procedure in Australia), the Beazley Committee, named after its Chairperson, Mr K. E. Beazley, a former federal minister for education. The Committee was given fourteen terms of reference and one year in which to conduct public meetings throughout a state of one million square miles occupied by 1·3 million people. The terms of reference related to secondary curriculum, literacy and numeracy skills, the certification of students, retention of students beyond post-compulsory schooling, community involvement in education, the education of children from minority groups such as Aboriginal children, handicapped students and girls disadvantaged by the education system.

The Committee visited over eighty schools, met with more than sixty persons and committees, and accommodated some 1,731 written submissions and within one year arrived at a set of conclusions which the education minister of the time committed himself to implementing.

The following recommendations were proposed by the Beazley Committee and adopted by the government.

1. The nomination of seven curriculum areas (not subjects) which should be studied by all students in the compulsory secondary years. These were English, languages and communication; social studies; mathematics; science and technology; physical education; personal and vocational education; and practical and creative arts.
2. The development of curriculum units for each curriculum area. These units were intended to provide essential content material, ensure continuous study following sequential material in each field, prepare students for further secondary education leading to higher education studies and to provide the possibility for students to pursue studies of interest across the range of curriculum areas at their own pace.

3. Articulation between primary and secondary education, and between compulsory secondary education and other forms of education whether they be further secondary education leading to tertiary education, or vocational education.
4. Changes in the education of secondary teachers so that they are able to teach across a range of disciplines (preferably two, if not three), and are able to address the needs of students from minority groups.
5. Decentralization of education to better allow for teachers to exercise their professional expertise and for parents to take a significant role in decision-making.

Central to these recommendations were the curriculum changes that are the subject of the remainder of this section.

Implementation of the Beazley report (1984) generated considerable discussion in government and the education ministry. The ministry faced four problems. First, the implementation of change inevitably involves questions of timing as programmes have to be developed, then trialled, implemented and evaluated. How quickly should the reform be implemented? The government permitted a lead time of almost four years before the Unit Curriculum program – the centerpiece of the Beazley report – was to be in place. With a fairly conservative profession such as the teaching profession in Australia, it took the direct action and demands of the minister for education to achieve the goal of general introduction of the unit curriculum only one year behind schedule. While the minister regarded this as too slow, most teachers considered it to be excessively rushed.

A second issue concerned the entrenched interests of the various disciplines. Under the previous system, mathematics, science, social science and English were regarded as 'core' subjects and all others as 'optional' units. The core unit curriculum designers and teachers were loathe to forgo any time in the teaching of these subjects, far less allow that the core number should be seven. Vested curriculum interests remain a problem, particularly as many parents also perceive that certain subjects are core and some remain optional. The central ministry of education will ensure that all seven units are treated appropriately and that its own priorities, the learning of a foreign language, for example, are adequately met by schools. The extent to which attitudes are changing remains somewhat problematic.

A third problem related to program development was the need to develop new curricula and to amend old ones. New curriculum areas, like personal and vocational education, required the writing, trialling and dissemination of completely new materials. Established curriculum fields, such as mathematics, had to be adjusted to provide learning modules covering a semester of teaching that were both complete in themselves and yet able to lead sequentially to another unit in that field. A considerable amount of curriculum writing was required. To some extent, old curricula were merely made to fit the new structures imposed by the unit curriculum system.

The fourth, and more basic, issue was that of equity versus excellence. The requirement that students study a broader range of subject areas and the focus on the relevance of schooling for personal needs led to the criticism that the ministry was more interested in promoting equity than excellence. The proposed curriculum policy did, however, enable brighter students to attain excellence in their areas of interest while providing for a broad-based and personally relevant curriculum. Further, the government sector has responded to the considerable 'flight' by secondary students from its schools by designating special schools where students may concentrate on studies in a particular field,

thus permitting excellence of attainment alongside the Australian expectation of a fair opportunity for everyone.

The education ministry implemented its curriculum reform and addressed the criticisms made of it in an all-too-brief year in which its proposals were trialled. Seven schools, country and metropolitan, government and private, were designated pilot schools in which the unit curriculum changes were implemented. An evaluation of the process indicated certain problems. Insufficient time was available to develop new curricula. The need for adequate enrollment in all classes restricted the number of classes which could be offered. There were problems of timetabling for flexibility, even using vertical timetabling. And excessive workloads were generated by the need to report on each term's activity. The evaluation found that despite these problems, all of the pilot schools regarded the Unit Curriculum as a major educational advance in Western Australia.

The concept was introduced in all government schools at the beginning of the 1988 school year. It is too early to appraise the success of this innovation which is the most significant reform in twenty years in the development of curricula for compulsory second education. It will be some time before the benefits of the new system become apparent and its weaknesses can be catalogued.

The Western Australian curriculum reform effort exemplifies many aspects of the politics of educational reform. It began with highly visible 'interference' in school policy-making by a minister of education and was troubled by the inertness of centralized state bureaucracy nominally committed to decentralization policies. In addition to serving as a case study in reform politics, the Western Australia case suggests that any attempt to implement a national curriculum policy will face substantial resistance if attempted soon after a state has instigated its own curriculum reforms generating considerable system-wide trauma.

Secondary school assessment and certification issues

In recent decades Australian schools have considerably reduced the amount of external student assessment and certification. Currently, no assessment is normally required for entry into primary or secondary schools (minimum age limits may apply) and children progress to secondary education in homogenous age groups. Certification at the completion of the compulsory years (normally after ten years of schooling) is based on internally conducted assessment. External assessment leading to certification – where it exists – is taken by students completing the full secondary education program, two years beyond the end of compulsory schooling.

The certification and assessment of students in Year 12, the final year of secondary schooling in the Australian education system, is quite pivotal both for the future opportunities of individual students and for the success of national education policy. Given the present lack of articulation between secondary and tertiary institutions, assessment of students highlights the inappropriateness of school curricula as much as the limited preparation of individual students. The movement towards a national education policy linking education to national economic development highlights the issue of certification and assessment. Using outside assessments to control access to tertiary education underscores the limited options available to education consumers. With the inter – and intra – sectoral obstacles preventing transition within and across educational sectors, the refusal by secondary and tertiary institutions to adopt an integrated and articulated curriculum slows individual progress and undermines national economic development goals.

Certification at the end of Year 12 has come under closer scrutiny as retention rates from the end of compulsory schooling to Year 11 and Year 12 have increased. Expected economic advantages from the two additional years of education are being reinforced by government actions that make continued school enrollment more attractive than unemployment. Dole payments have been withdrawn or made more difficult to obtain for youth able to stay in school. Employers in both the public and private sectors are also reinforcing completion of Year 12 by making demonstrated school experience or achievement a prerequisite for employment. As ambivalent as employers have been about the adequacy of the school systems, they are pressing potential employees to obtain more advanced educational qualifications.

Another factor encouraging formal assessment of Year 12 graduates is the tertiary institutions' expectation that secondary schools, despite the pressure for expanding the numbers of students completing the additional two years, will adequately prepare more students for tertiary studies and sort graduates into norm-referenced groups for admissions screening.

Parents and students are drawing attention to assessment and certification procedures. They find courses unsuitable, assessment procedures complex or mysterious and the outcomes unsatisfactory, particularly when scores appear to have been manipulated by third parties or where a score obtained, which in a previous year would have enabled entry into a university, no longer meets admission criteria.

These factors increasing the demand for better Year 12 certification are complemented by several factors affecting the supply of educational services and resources. Most significantly, financial, curriculum and teaching resources are inadequate to meet the needs of a large influx of new and returning students in the upper secondary schools. Moreover, policies and resources do not facilitate the flow of an increasing number of individuals into tertiary institutions. Policies governing tertiary institutions are rather confused in the face of the new educational and political demands being placed on them. For example, in the recent report of an enquiry into Upper Secondary Certification and Tertiary Entrance, the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) system was said to have 'legitimate claims to being called tertiary'. Yet TAFE was not included in the reviewer's deliberations because it was held to be not exclusively a tertiary system and had entrance provisions different from the principal tertiary institutions, the universities and colleges of advanced education (CAEs). This confusion springs from the fact that TAFE has traditionally been a low status, poor cousin in the tertiary sector. All too often status overshadows national goal setting when the issue of certification, particularly at the upper secondary level, comes under scrutiny. Institutional turf battles keep the certification system from providing objective evidence that can be used to identify placement for each student regardless of previous experience.

Before the problem of certification can be adequately addressed, policy-makers will have to recognize that it involves the often hidden Australian conflict between egalitarianism and elitism. This conflict was initially broached with the introduction of compulsory education and revisited with each increase of its duration over the last one hundred and forty years. For so long as compulsory education kept the egalitarianism ideal alive, it has not mattered that a minority of the population proceeded via private or upper secondary education to tertiary educational institutions providing elite students with access into certain professions. The educational elite controlled upper secondary certification and assessment, gradually accommodating a rising number of aspirants to that certification while preventing tertiary schools from becoming part of the egalitarian elementary and secondary systems.

Within the last decade this picture has changed dramatically. Completion of twelve years of schooling, rather than the compulsory ten, is now the norm for most of the population. Battle lines have been drawn over the appropriate role of upper secondary education. On the one side are those who want expanded access to tertiary education, more variety in curriculum offerings and a criterion referenced assessment system. On the other side are those who want to maintain the traditional role of upper secondary education as a mechanism for servicing and sorting the population to determine who will be invited to proceed to tertiary education. This latter position does not necessarily seek to deny upper secondary education for all students, but resists expansion at the expense of the traditional role. Up to this point, reviews, reports and reforms covering upper secondary certification and assessment in all states and at the federal level in Australia have, in principle at least, left the traditional role intact. The egalitarian thrust has been accommodated by devising alternative curricula and new forms of assessment and certification that do not require abandoning the traditional screening process. Political pressure may become focused on the elitism issue when assessment and certification appropriate to the principle of upper secondary education for all are introduced in lower secondary education. These changes may, in turn, bring renewed pressure for change at the upper secondary level, if the youth are not to be seriously disadvantaged by the assessment system.

The politics of certification and assessment in Australia, responding to the particular case of upper school certification, raises questions about the political purposes of education. The K-12 school system plays a unique role in supporting the national egalitarian ideal. That role cannot be fulfilled unless the certification and assessment system documents criterion referenced achievement rather than sorting and screening an elite for the tertiary sector. Indeed, the development of such a system for Year 12 students will soon be confronted with a further demand to open the tertiary sector itself for egalitarian participation. If new certification systems are not developed, the sheer weight of demand may swamp the upper secondary system and spill over into other education institutions.

Policies that have any hope of resolving the elite-egalitarian tension will need to be based on three premises:

1. Acknowledgement that the entire K-12 elementary and secondary system is intrinsically egalitarian – legitimated by its ability to provide school for all.
2. The tertiary education sector will manage its own entrance requirements rather than relying on secondary certification and assessment screening.
3. A national framework for certification and assessment for all educational sectors will be designed to maximize articulation.

The emerging national commitment to link education with economic development has already accepted the first two of these premises. The third – a national certification and assessment framework – could be produced through the participation of federal and state policy makers. If co-operation is not forthcoming, we can expect a top-down federally imposed system which is politically and constitutionally possible, or disparate and inadequate responses which will weaken both individual opportunity and the national interest.

The private sector is a wild card in the political resolution of this problem. Australian primary and secondary education has been strongly influenced by this sector, generally composed of fee-paying, church-founded institutions with a reputation for maintaining an educational elitism. Up to the present, however, the private sector has had little impact on tertiary education which has been the domain of government institutions. The emergence

of private – not always for profit – tertiary institutions may impact on the certification and assessment issue. Initial readings of the situation suggest the impact will not be based on the egalitarian premises noted above.

The politics of aid for private schools

Almost 30% of all Australian students now attend private schools, the majority of which are Catholic parochial schools (Smart and Dudley 1989). In 1964 the bipartisan tradition of 'no state aid' for private schools was breached by the conservative Menzies federal government's provision of science laboratories for all secondary schools. A subsequent challenge in Australia's High Court has confirmed the constitutionality of government aid for private schools (Birch 1984).

Aid to private schools from both state and federal governments now totals roughly $A1b per annum. The model of aid for private schools has been the 'needs based' one established by the federal Schools Commission in 1973. This currently provides for a graduated twelve category scale of school 'need' in which the poorest schools (Category 12, which includes 75% of the Catholic schools) receive $1627 per student and the wealthiest schools (Category 1) $498 per student. The state governments provide roughly similar amounts of aid on the same need category basis.

Over the twenty-five year period of federal aid to schools, the federal government has gradually come to be regarded as the guarantor of the right to existence and financial support of private schools. However, the 'state aid' question is by no means dead and it resurfaces periodically in relation to the 'elite' private schools. Both the Whitlam (1972–75) and Hawke (1983–) Labor governments attempted to abolish aid to wealthy private schools but were ultimately forced by powerful private school interests to concede the right of such schools to some support form the public purse (Smart 1987a). The wealthiest private schools continue to be suspicious of the intentions of governments towards them and many have established impressive fund-raising foundations and trusts in recent years with a view to ensuring their continued viability in the event that government support is ever withheld.

On the other hand, the vast majority of private schools are poor and Catholic and rely on governments for as much as 75% of their operating costs. These schools have become, in many respects, an alternative government system, run much like a state department of education by their large bureaucratic state Catholic education commissions.

With large sums of government money being spent on private schools it is hardly surprising that government bureaucratic regulation and accountability mechanisms have proliferated and become a major cause of concern to private school administrators. In particular, increasingly intrusive and obstructive regulations concerning school expansion and development, change of school sites, accountability statements on school enrollment and governance policies, and so on, have been the source of much debate and concern. Many of the so-called 'elite' non-Catholic private schools which pride themselves on their autonomy are convinced that the Hawke Labor Government is deliberately frustrating their independence (Smart 1988a). Many of these schools are increasingly asking whether, in the long run, it might be better to forgo government support in order to avoid the growing risk of dependency, or of ultimate 'takeover' by government. Uncertainty about the future has been abetted by the recent abolition of the federal Schools Commission and its replacement by a smaller less consensual Schools Council.

Two future scenarios or some combination of them seem possible. First, we may see a

situation emerge in which the state and federal governments 'take control' of the Catholic systems which they now largely fund. The more likely scenario is a continuation of something not unlike the present situation though with the possibility of the 'elite' private schools being refused government support on equity grounds, or their declining to accept government aid on the grounds that it is too little support for too great a sacrifice in autonomy. What is certain, however, is that no government can now turn back the clock and decline support for the poor Catholic schools. The Australian polity now firmly accepts that such aid is appropriate and just.

Conclusion

It is clear that increasing integration of the global economy and its enhancement of national consciousness of international competition is a powerful dynamic influencing much reform and restructuring in Australian education. Undoubtedly economic rationalism is a major force behind the increasing federal role in Australian education policy, a role which we predict will continue to grow as we move into the twenty-first century. At both state and federal policy levels the same dynamic seems likely to foster a continued press for stronger linkages between the traditionally aloof education sector and the sectors of business, employment and training.

Recent turbulence in the education policy-making arena seems likely to accelerate as its professional ranks become increasingly influenced and infiltrated by 'outsiders' such as politicians, employers and concerned community groups. In short, the politicization of education policy seems likely to grow rather than diminish so long as widespread anxiety about the quality and direction of education persists in the community. Other major on-going issues in Australian education are those of structural reform, curriculum reform, and accountability. We have seen two contradictory movements in structural reform – an increasing centralization of education policy in the hand of state and federal ministers as they reduce or even abolish the role of education commissions and expert advisory bodies and, simultaneously, apparently serious efforts to decentralize the power of state departments of education. There seems to be a strong commitment to correcting a traditional Australian weakness of school-level autonomy by providing structural and financial support for the development of stronger school site management. It is possible that as Australia decentralizes and the United States centralizes at the state department level we may reach a common point in our educational governance in the future. Curriculum reform is being driven very much by the national economic agenda. It remains to be seen just how far the federal government is prepared or able to go (given state constitutional sensitivities) in its current push for agreed national educational goals and a national curriculum framework.

Finally, accountability is perhaps the most important emerging issue as the politicians gain an increasing stranglehold on education policy. The lack of educational sophistication of these new education policy supremos leads us to predict that a central issue in the politics of Australian education as the twenty-first century approaches will be that of 'performance indicators'.

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Education Politics for the New Century: past issues and future directions

Douglas E. Mitchell
University of California, Riverside

The formal study of the politics of education is a relatively recent phenomenon. While political analysis is among the oldest of the social science disciplines, its application to schooling was almost totally neglected before the 1950s. Mainstream political scientists had well developed theories and a substantial body of empirical data on political behavior at all levels of goverment for several decades before serious attention was given to the political parameters of educational program and policy dimensions. Indeed, to this very day, intellectual interest in education politics is the province of only a tiny handful of scholars and researchers. There are not a dozen scholars holding appointments in university departments of political science who specialize in public school politics, and only a small fraction of the schools or departments of education have political specialists.

While interest in the political dimensions of American education has grown substantially in the last three decades, we are dependent on historians, rather than political scientists, for scholarly analysis of events prior to the 1950s. Political scientists, who began work in earnest before 1960, expanded their influence substantially in the two decades following the founding of the Politics of Education Association at the 1969 meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Political analysis, while still very limited when compared with psychologically-based studies of learning and child development or sociologically-based studies of school organization and administration, has produced a number of good books and a steadily growing research literature. It is illuminating to briefly retrace the historical circumstances that created the context for this growing interest in the politics of education.

Why the political view was so slow to develop

Three broad social developments during the early years of the twentieth century helped to deflect attention from the political dimensions of public education. All were rooted in late nineteenth century developments but came into full view shortly after the turn of the century. Taken separately, each would have had a relatively limited impact. In combination, however, they gave rise to the widely endorsed slogan: 'Get politics out of education and get the schools out of politics.'

The first development, the *urban reform* political movement, succeeded in moralizing the politics of municipal and county government and challenged the legitimacy of the ethnic – and social class-based, special interest 'machine' politics that dominated local governance during the last decades of the nineteenth century. In many states this movement succeeded in creating civil service protection for government workers, including tenure laws for public school teachers. It also broke up the ward-based election system in many communities,

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removed political partisanship from the candidate selection process, and moved elections to off-years or away from scheduled party-based elections for state and national office (see Mitchell 1984 and Peterson 1985).

The second important development was the adoption of a philosophy of *progressivism* by many leading educators, most notably John Dewey. Progressivism provided a fundamentally new rationale for selecting school programs and policies. Progressive educators encouraged professional control over the schools by insisting that the primary goal of education is to *transform* children – preparing them for a new world of social and economic realities which they would create for themselves, rather than simply passing on to them the cultural values and technical skills of their parents generation (see Cremin 1964)

The third critical development during this period was the advent of *scientific management*. As articulated by Frederick Taylor (1911) and other popular theorists of the day, scientific management provided the rationale for the development of a strong superintendent role for local school districts. Scientific managers, the theory went, could dramatically increase productivity and overall cost-efficiency if they created closely supervised, bureaucratically structured school organizations. Managers could improve the economic efficiency of the schools by carefully conducting 'time and motion studies' to determine exactly how large classes should be, how long they should remain in session, and how students should be moved and tracked through the educational system (see Callahan 1962).

In combination, these three forces virtually eliminated the legitimacy of ordinary political processes in education. The urban reformers saw politicians as self-centered advocates of special interests whose principal contribution to urban life was replacement of the public interest with special interest venality and greed. The excesses of machine politics in New York, Chicago and other metropolitan centers gave ample evidence to support this view. The philosophical progressives saw education as a source of community development, and encouraged separating program and policy decisions from the preferences of the uninformed and unenlightened. Education, from this point of view, is the leading edge of progressive community improvement – not a service provided in response to articulated family or community interests. And the scientific managers wanted politics removed from the process so that there would be no interference with the development of a business-like system of hierarchical control and direction.

While all three social movements sought to disconnect the schools from the politics of regular governmental bodies, they differed sharply regarding both the reasons for removing politics from school governance and the intended beneficiaries of the changed decision making process. Urban reformers wanted to give power to non-partisan members of a civic elite – individuals who would take public service as a moral duty rather than an economic opportunity. They assumed that this would insulate the schools from the baser motives of uneducated lower class citizens and the self-serving opportunism of unscrupulous party hacks. Such a view obscures the role of political leadership in discerning and articulating fundamental community values and norms. Political decision making is inherently value laden – some values are reinforced, others are suppressed. The question is not whether this will happen, but whose values will dominate the process. When responsibility for identifying the 'public interest' is passed into the hands of a political elite whose sense of civic responsibility guides their policy judgments, members of that elite bring the values and norms of their own social class into the office with them. Generally, they express those values unself-consciously, as if they naturally represented values embraced by the entire community.

The progressives accepted elite political control, but their primary interest was in freeing school policy from the press of immediate political and client demands. They sought to professionalize education, to see schools as a vehicle for expanding human potential rather

than a device for serving current needs. Progressives believed in community influences so that children learned about possibilities for an idealized future rather than the mundane realities of the present.

The scientific managers were the beneficiaries of a business and industry take-over of local school boards. They reinforced the urban reformers dedication to buffering the schools from direct political pressure. The result was an effort to make the superintendent of schools the only important political actor on the school payroll, protecting all other school employees by making them explicitly subordinate to superintendent supervision and direction.

As these three forces coalesced, the idea that schools are political entities disappeared from public consciousness. Schools were merely productive organizations like business and industrial corporations. Control was to be analyzed in terms of business management, and programs evaluated in relationship to professional standards. Public investment was to be measured in terms of civic and economic development – not responsiveness to family and student interests and desires. The personal investments of families and students who paid for, and worked at learning in, the schools were to be measured in terms of long term 'return on investment', rather than short term availability of desired services. It made perfect sense, in this context, to say that education need not be an enjoyable experience and to tell the recalcitrant or unhappy student that, 'If you want a good job you better get a good education.'

The eclipse of education politics was so successful that neither political scientists nor educators undertook a single important empirical study of the nature and effects of political factors in education during the entire first half of the twentieth century. As Iannaccone (1967) has noted, the professional control over education, which dominated school policy during the second quarter of the twentieth century under the banner of keeping politics out of the schools, was one of the most successful political strategies in American history. Professional control was almost uniformly accepted. Debates had to be couched in technical and psychological language just to get onto the decision-making agenda of most school boards and many state legislatures. Throughout this period federal involvement was limited to program level support – primarily for vocational and agricultural education programs.

There were, of course, important political issues plaguing policy-makers and professional educators throughout this period. They were seen primarily as moral and civic questions, however, not as the proper business of party politics and democratic deliberation. The three most prominent issues during the first half of the twentieth century eventually came to be known as the '3Rs of school politics': Religion, Race and Rural/urban conflicts over school finance (see Iannaccone and Cistone 1974).

The religion issue initially surfaced as a struggle over whether families would be allowed to separate themselves from the public schools and incorporate religious concepts and worship experiences into the entire fabric of their children's educational programs. This aspect of the issue was resolved in favor of religious expression in *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* 268 US 510 (1925). The right to maintain private sectarian schools was affirmed in this early court case but the issue was far from settled. Members of religious minority groups continued to feel that many public school systems were utilizing state funds and state authority to foster particular religious beliefs in violation of the Constitutional 'establishment' clause. Two arguments dominated the debate. First, religious minority groups were joined by civil libertarians in arguing that prayer, Bible reading, recognition of various religious holidays, and various other religion-related activities in the schools were constitutionally prohibited – whether or not objecting children were excused from participation. Second, families who were paying tuition to send their children to sectarian

religious schools tended to feel that they were being 'double taxed' for education – paying once for the public schools and then having to pay again for the education of their own children.[1]

Attention to the issue of race was largely informal and generally involved defending inadequate schools for minority populations with the 'separate but equal' doctrine handed down in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 168 US 537 (1896). The anti-politics of the urban reform, progressive education, scientific management coalition was largely successful in keeping the K-12 school system from becoming overtly entangled in race politics until the issue was addressed by the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 US 483 (1954). The political strategy for insulating the race question was to claim that public school programs and policies are 'color blind', and that differences in the quality of service were accidents of geography or the fault of the minority families themselves.

Conflicts between rural and urban interests focused on distributing the cost of education between state and local taxing authorities. Until *Baker v. Carr*, 369 US 186 (1962) established the one-man/one-vote principle, most state legislatures were dominated by rural interests. Industrial and commercial properties located in urban school districts enabled them to raise greater revenue through local property taxes. The picture changed dramatically when states were forced to re-district, with the result that urban districts turned to state funding sources more frequently and helped create the system of categorical programs that would justify directing state funds to urban centers and special needs children.

Discovery of the politics of education

Four events of national importance dramatically altered school politics during the 1950s and '60s. In combination, these events brought an end to the urban reform, progressive education, scientific management anti-political consensus that had dominated education policy making for half a century.

Yankee ingenuity

First came a reconstruction of the role of education in national security. During and immediately following the Second World War it became clear that technological innovation rather than manpower strength or popular dedication would control the future of armed warfare. Though the Geneva Convention limited the use of biological and chemical warfare, it worked only by facilitating mutual restraint – not by ending the development and stockpiling of lethal substances. Simultaneously, popular awareness of the famed 'Manhattan Project' for development of the atomic bomb gave credance to a widely held belief that 'yankee ingenuity' had won the War.

As the Cold War replaced overt conflict, a heightened emphasis on economic and technical might underscored the importance of education as an element in national security. Foreign language instruction, math, science and technology training, and above all, reiteration of the virtues of the American free-enterprise system were increasingly brought into national consciousness as fundamental education goals.

Desegregation

Before this changing view of education could substantially undermine the progressive ideology stressing schooling as socialization for adult life and an opportunity for individual growth and development, the second major event occurred. After years of litigation, the Supreme Court's landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decisions in 1954 and 1955 (359 US 294) declared that schools had a positive role to play in the creation of equal opportunities for all citizens. Striking down the 'separate but equal' doctrine of *Plessy* the Court ordered the dismantling of the nation's dual school systems.

The *Brown* decision brought politics directly to the schoolhouse door. First in the South where governors and local educators openly resisted the Court, and later in the North and West, as it became clear that many school officials were conspiring with racist community leaders to isolate minority groups by controlling the location of new schools or gerrymandering existing school attendance boundaries. Over the next several years it became increasingly obvious that power politics played a key role in creating and sustaining a system of unequal access to fiscal as well as human resources for the nation's schools.

Documentation of systematic inequalities dramatically undermined public confidence in the professionalism and political neutrality of the earlier coalition of reformers and scientific managers. Blacks had demonstrated what many other citizens suspected – school resources were not being allocated on the basis of either political equity or economic productivity criteria. The coalition which for half a century had insisted that politics must be kept out of the schools in order to keep interest groups from exploiting them was shown to be equally implicated in a system of neglect and abuse.

Sputnik

Just as resistance to racial desegregation was becoming front page news, the nation's attention was once again riveted on the role of education in national security by the 1957 launching of the Russian *Sputnik* satellite. If the race question undermined confidence in the moral commitments of progressives and urban reformers, *Sputnik* was devastating to American confidence in the school's scientific managers. In shrill cries of panic not to be heard again until publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, federal leaders called for a crash program to improve school productivity. National security and educational program development were explicitly linked in 1958 with passage of the National Defense Education Act. Education was declared too important to be left to the educators; political interest in school programs and management practices quickly spawned massive federal investments and linked school budgets to the adoption of programs adopted by Congress and state legislatures.

Soon the fiscal control strategy of categorical budgeting became the norm for programs addressing racial equity issues as well. Schools were required to show that funds were spent for purposes defined by the political system rather than by professional educators. 'Supplementing versus supplanting' controversies soon arose as political leaders suspiciously eyed educators suspected of trying to undermine the over-riding goals in international competition and equalization of educational opportunity.

Collective bargaining

With the New York teachers' strike of 1960, the last remaining vestiges of the earlier anti-politics framework collapsed. Formalization of collective bargaining required direct political intervention by state legislatures and the creation of adjudication mechanisms in the executive and judicial branches of state government. Unlike earlier state level policy decisions, this divided the educational community in rancorous and extended conflict. Elected officials at all levels of government were forced to choose between teacher advocates and the defenders of school administrators and local boards who insisted that collective bargaining was a violation of managerial integrity and an abrogation of the political sovereignty of the local school board. Though the battle lasted for nearly two decades, teachers in all but a few states eventually won the right to organize unions and engage in collective bargaining following the model established by the National Labor Relations Act of the 1930s (see Kerchner and Mitchell 1988).

Collective bargaining is an affront to scientific management theory. It assumes that workers have legitimate interests that managers either cannot recognize or will not voluntarily accommodate. It also departs from the progressive philosophy of a totally child-centered educational system by making conflict among adults a critical element in the formation of programs and policies. Finally, collective bargaining represents an abandonment of the anti-politics of the urban reform movement. Teacher organizers directly challenged the virtues of non-political school governance. They had to argue that direct political expression of teacher self-interest was both legitimate and necessary. Indeed, they had to assert that existing school policies and practices were the result of self-interest on the part of school adminstrators and unrepresentative board members in order to muster the political support needed to get collective bargaining laws through state legislatures. Thus, by the time the New York teacher strike was settled, the nation was well aware that school policy is every bit as political as social welfare, criminal justice, transportation or any other domestic policy problem. In the ensuing decade, school politics played prominent role in both the legislative and judicial branches of the federal government.

Recent developments in education politics

By the end of the 1950s it had become clear that political considerations were every bit as important to the development of school programs and policies as learning psychology, teaching pedagogy or management theory. Some scholars were even beginning to take school politics seriously. Thomas Eliot (1957), writing in the prestigious *American Political Science Review*, offered a plan for scholarly investigation of the politics of education. Shortly thereafter a fledgling literature on the subject began to develop. By 1962, the first major study of state level politics was published (Bailey *et al.* 1962). In the ensuing thirty years a small group of politically-trained scholars has examined a broad range of key issues. With the formation of the Politics of Education Association in 1969 a true sub-discipline came into existence – complete with a professional association, sharing of scholarly work in progress at annual conferences, and the beginnings of a scholarly journal. During the 1970s and '80s political science interest in the politics of education was augmented by work derived from rational planning, program evaluation and policy research scholars. A new US journal, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, was launched by the American Educational Research Association. Then, in 1986, the British publisher Taylor & Francis brought international recognition to the field by agreeing to publish an annual politics of education

Yearbook (the first published in 1987) under the auspices of their newly-launched *Journal of Education Policy*.

Among recent changes in the politics of education, four deserve special mention here. Two are unique to the United States – the rise of court influence in school operations, and the dramatic withdrawal of federation support for school policies and programs (documented in chapter 2 of this volume). Court influence, the 'legalization' of education (Kirp and Jensen 1986 and Mitchell 1989), combined with collective bargaining has added enormously to the number and complexity of formal rules governing day-to-day school operations. This process has made school operations appear convoluted and very difficult to change in any substantial way. The withdrawal of federal support, as documented in David Clark and Terry Astuto's excellent essay, has both reduced funding for equity-oriented school programs and shifted the primary arena for innovation and reform to state capitals and local districts.

The other two recent developments in education politics are international in scope, affecting education systems throughout the industrialized West. The first is professionalization of the teaching workforce, and the second is restructuring school organization and governance at the local level. Depending on location, teacher professionalization involves some combination of the following factors:

- extended teacher authority over school program and policy decisions;
- stronger collegial ties among teachers who have traditionally worked in relative isolation;
- extended and more specialized training programs;
- differentiated staffing patterns, with work responsibilities differentiated by job assignment or title (often called career ladders);
- increased salaries;
- enhanced social recognition and prestige.

The motivation for enhancing teacher professionalism is mixed. One strand of political support is driven by the recognition of recent problems in teacher recruitment and retention. Teacher candidates are in relatively short supply, many who are trained do not actively seek teaching jobs, and realtively large numbers of teachers leave the occupation during their first five years. Professionalization is expected to ameliorate these problems in two quite different ways. On the one hand, professionalization is expected to make teaching careers more attractive and rewarding to those who enter the occupation – thus increasing the supply of well qualified candidates. On the other hand, professionalization is seen as a strategy for enhancing the effectiveness of the best teachers and extending their influence over less qualified teachers or paraprofessional workers. Many policy-makers expect a relatively small number of highly qualified (and probably highly paid) professional teachers to exert leadership and provide close supervision for less qualified staff members.

It is too soon to tell whether the professionalization strategy will significantly alter school performance. Several factors are likely to limit the overall effect. First, professional level salaries are high compared to those paid to most teachers today. By creating more sharply pyramided salaries than currently exist, it is possible to provide a limited number of teachers with truly professional level salaries (as negotiated contracts have done in places like Rochester, New York). It is not likely, however, that taxpayers will be willing to bear the burden of professional level salaries for most teachers. In addition to salary considerations, teacher working conditions are a far cry from those ordinarily associated with professional level workers. Access to support staff, comfortable working conditions and limited client loads are routine parts of typical professional jobs. How much this would cost in added tax dollars is difficult to calculate, but it is certainly not a trivial amount of the total cost of professionalization.

Beyond fiscal considerations, the shear number of teachers required to staff the public schools makes it difficult to recruit enough individuals willing to accept professional responsibility for their work. In the US, public school teaching requires nearly one-quarter of the graduates produced by the nation's colleges and universities. Just insisting that they be drawn from the top half of their graduating classes (a standard well below that of medicine and other prestigious professions) would mean that public schools would need to recruit half of this pool of eligibles. Raising salaries would help, but little is known about the extent to which business, law, engineering, medicine and other professions would be willing to bid still higher for these highly qualified candidates.

School restructuring is the other political development of international significance. Where professionalization seeks to make schools more effective by enhancing the productivity of the teaching workforce, restructuring is supported by those who see productivity as a systemic rather than a teacher performance problem. Most restructuring proposals involve two key elements. First, they extend the decentralization or devolution of authority concepts that have driven recent federal policy changes by emphasizing the critical importance of enhancing discretionary authority and power at the school site. By allowing local educators, working directly with children and their families, to plan and organize educational programs, the argument goes, complex adjustments to individual differences, local circumstances and subcultural variations are most likely to be productive. The extent to which decentralization involves political rather than managerial discretion varies from one restucturing proposal to another. Administrative and managerial authority is basic, but many restructuring advocates insist that political control is critical to long term success.

The second key element in most restructuring proposals is an emphasis on the importance of sub-cultural norms and values in school productivity. As outlined in the chapters by Mary Metz and Thomas Timar, staff and community beliefs are closely linked to individual school sites and are changed, if at all, by addressing them at the site level. This insight has led to increasing support for the creation of stronger site level organizations capable of capitalizing on the strengths of local values and able to directly address the limitations imposed by inappropriate local value systems.

Cynics may view the popularity of restructuring as an admission that a quarter-century of reform and innovation have not worked. Federal, state and district policy-makers have tried an enormous variety of policy tactics to bring about school and classroom level change. Virtually every major sub-system – programs, curricula, assessment, governance, management, finance, facilities design – has been subjected to direct intervention. The results, restructuring advocates seem to insist, have been disruption and contradiction rather than improved productivity.

Whether rooted in despair over past reforms or a determination to build on previous accomplishments, however, restructuring is now the dominant theme in school reform. It is linked, as noted by Carol Ray and Roslyn Mickelson, to the forced restructuring of industry brought about by international markets and rapid technological change. It is also linked to the belief that schools should respect individual differences and enhance equal opportunity for all children – the principal legacy of racial and cultural equity reforms during the last quarter of a century. It remains to be seen, however, whether local school sites can achieve the cohesiveness and dedication to excellence that restructuring advocates expect.

The core tensions to be faced by twenty-first century politics

If federal withdrawal, legalization of decision-making, professionalization of teaching, and

restructuring of local school systems are currently the dominant themes of school politics, what issues will drive education policy and politics as we move into the next century? Attempting to answer such questions is risky and almost embarrassing to those foolish enough to try. Despite this risk, however, speculation on the future is helpful in putting present conditions into proper perspective, even if unforeseen events overpower the logic and make a mockery of the assumptions used in making projections. Let me conclude this chapter, therefore, by proposing that education politics at the beginning of the twenty-first century will be controlled by seven key decisions – decisions that must be made by the seven fundamental interest groups whose actions determine overall education policy directions and control the operations of school organizations, however they are structured.

The key questions to be faced include:

1. *By the nation as a whole*: How are the economic productivity and civic socialization goals of education to be balanced?
2. *By education policy-makers*: How are local autonomy and centralized authority to be balanced in school organization and design?
3. *By reformers and their supporters*: Are school cultures appropriately seen as the *objects* or the *instruments* of reform?
4. *By professional educators*: Are schools best seen as managed bureaucracies or as professional service communities?
5. *By families and communities*: Are the core goals of education best pursued through private choice or insistence on compliance with the public interest?
6. *By students*: Is the greatest benefit from learning the protection and enhancement of property interests, or does it come from formation and expansion of personal and cultural identity?
7. *By education planners and researchers*: Is advancing technology education's primary problem, or does it represent the most promising solution to pressing social, cultural and resource problems?

Economic productivity or civic socialization?

National support for mass, free compulsory education has always involved a mixture of civic and economic goals. Economic productivity is linked to education through the concept of 'human capital development' – the idea that education increases the skill and capacity of workers, thus raising the overall value of their work. Whether viewed from the perspective of increasing the general capacity of average workers, or enhancing the unique value of specialized workers with more advanced training, this approach to education evaluates school performance on the basis of whether graduates are able to secure and hold jobs.

By contrast, the civic goals of education relate more to personal, family and political life. Schooling is widely recognized as playing a major role in the formation of community values, the creation of sound families, and the enhancement of personal satisfaction and enjoyment. Viewed from this perspective, schools are seen as productive when political participation is high, crime and alienation are low, families are stable, and individuals have access to the world of science and art, ideas and rewarding personal experiences.

While both of these educational goals are essential to a prosperous and stable society, they are in continuous tension. Resources used to enhance personal sensibilities may or may not lead to greater productivity; economically valuable knowledge and skills may or may not enhance personal, family or community life. As we move into the twenty-first century it will

be necessary to wrestle with the balance between these goals and to organize and fund schools according to the priority assigned to each.

Centralized authority or local autonomy?

The most obvious examples of the growth of centralized policy control involve the expansion of federal involvement in the schools. While federal policy centralization was dramatically reduced during the 1980s, the result has been more than offset by the growth in centralized state-level policy control. Ideologically, however, the battle lines have been drawn – greater centralization is advocated by those who fear local school districts cannot be trusted to guarantee school performance effectiveness in a context of equal opportunity, decentralization is supported by those who fear that state and federal policy-makers are insensitive to local variations in context and educational goals. Whatever the mix of economic and civic goals established for the schools, policy makers will need to identify a proper balance between centralized control over the school operations and support for decentralized and locally autonomous school districts and sites. For more than a quarter of a century the emphasis has been on centralized intervention to reform or redirect local programs and practices. Reform advocates recognized, and regularly decried, the 'religion of localism' that protected local educators from responding to pressures for change.

Centralization of authority has been the policy strategy of those who see financial efficiency and equalization of educational opportunity as the most important problems facing the schools. Support for decentralized authority and local autonomy have always been endorsed by those who see preservation of choice and maintenance of program quality as the more important policy considerations.

The tension between centralization and decentralization of policy control is well documented in the chapters of this book. Mary Metz and Thomas Timar describe the power of local cultures and the importance of utilizing them for creation of quality programs. The Atlanta story as told by Orfield and Peskin presents the dilemma of equity advocates – centralized power forces recognition of the problem, but does not seem able to force redirection of school programs and outcomes. As suggested in McGuire's chapter, business leaders seeking accountability and efficiency in the schools tend to organize state level coalitions to influence policy. Those who want program change tend to follow local strategies – school partnerships and local district education task forces.

Schools as cultures or culture as reform instrument?

Perhaps the most important theoretical argument to be faced in preparation for the new century concerns the role of culture in the schools. It is quite clear that culture is a fundamental element in school operations. What is not clear is whether culture is the *means* of reform or the *object* of reform. Where culture is seen as the means of reform, educators are urged to manage cultural elements. They are told to create a 'common vision' of school purposes, establish a 'positive climate' for learning, and assure 'high expectations' for student achievement throughout the school. Where culture is seen as the object of reform, however, such strategies are viewed as naive and unduly optimistic. As described in the chapter by Mary Metz and confirmed in the case study data presented by Ray and Mickelson, cultures are more enduring and less subject to direct manipulation than many recent teacher and administrator training programs would suggest. Cultural norms are both more tenacious and less explicit than many reformers recognize.

Nevertheless, cultural norms and values play a critical role in sustaining school programs and directing the energies of both students and teachers. Hence, fundamental and lasting reforms will eventually have come to grips with the cultural foundations of schooling. Children whose families are unwilling or unable to inculcate core values needed for successful participation in the labor market, or whose own sense of identity and worth has been damaged to the point that the motivation to learn is impaired, must be treated with cultural enhancement as well as ordinary pedagogical techniques. The question that will carry reformers and researchers alike through the remaining years of the twentieth century is how to create powerful school cultures without trampling upon and destroying needed elements in family and community cultural systems. To do so will call for new insights into the development of pluralistic social systems, the naturalization of cultural aliens, and the synthesis of diverse cultures into synergistic new cultural patterns.

Managed bureaucracy or professional community?

For administrators the key question is whether to view schools as bureaucracies or as professional communities. During the early decades of the twentieth century, administrators, together with their school board supporters, struggled mightily to turn schools from local child care and nurture institutions into businesslike managed bureaucracies. Hierarchical authority, formal rules of procedure, merit based supervision of subordinates, differentiation of status, and other marks of what Max Weber called an 'ideal type' bureaucracy were carefully nurtured.

While there is no chance that schools could be returned to their nineteenth-century structural form, there are serious pressures to replace current bureaucratic features with those of a professional community. Professional community organization is the essential character of the school site management thrust outlined in the chapter by Ian Birch and Don Smart. It is also the organizational form endorsed by the Coalition of Essential Schools described in Thomas Timar's chapter.

The distinguishing feature of the professional community approach to organizational administration is the shift of power away from 'line' administrators and into the hands of those who are directly responsible for the productive process. In the case of the schools, this means dividing the teaching workforce into relatively small teams who are assigned comprehensive responsibility for the education of a cohort of students. In order for administrators to have the confidence needed to support such an organization, they need to believe that teachers are truly professionalized – willing and able to accept broad responsibility for assessing student learning needs and developing programs to meet those needs. Such confidence contrasts sharply with the attitudes and beliefs responsible for the earlier bureaucratization of the school. Bureaucratic organization was developed on the assumption that central management had to overcome the limited capacity of teachers to diagnose student needs, develop appropriate programs, and manage the fiscal and political dimensions of school/community relations. Over the next decade it will, no doubt, become clear whether teacher preparation and collegial planning systems can create and sustain an authentic professionalism. If so, teacher unions can be turned into professional associations and given a major role in school organization and management. If not, administators will be expected to reassert comprehensive responsibility, treat teacher unions as 'blue collar' worker organizations and shift program planning and teacher supervision into the hands of specialists with the training necessary to perform these tasks.

Private choice or public interest?

For families and ordinary citizens, the central issue is whether education is a matter of private preference or public interest. While the fundamental interests of families in the welfare and education of their children has long been recognized, compulsory school attendance laws were adopted because many parents did not enroll their children in public schools. These laws assert the unequivocal interest of the state in assuring that all children will receive at least a minimum education. Where, then, is the boundary between family choice and the public interest in an educated citizenry?

Legally and officially, the early twentieth century answer to this question was that families had a right to control the duration and content of their children's education only if they were willing to: (*a*) adhere to minimal state standards; and (*b*) pay all costs associated with their choices. Recently, the issue of family choice has once again become the focus of a major education policy debate. Voucher plans, open enrollment options and home schooling plans have been added to elective courses and multiple track school programs to give impetus to the move toward expanded family control over education. At the same time, pressures to standardize school programs, prepare children for entry into a national labor market, raise overall achievement in comparison with other industrialized nations, and use the schools to assure acquisition of national and community values continue to militate against freedom of choice for both students and their families.

In the co..ing years, finding an acceptable balance between individual choice and enforcement of the public interest will remain a critical political issue. Equally important, this issue intersects with the issues of professionalism, centralization, school cultural development, and economic versus civic socialization goals for education described above. The simplest mechanisms for enhancing choice are likely to undermine other important political goals. If demands for expanded choice are ignored, however, broad political support for the public school system may be threatened. Perhaps the most important question confronting policy-makers and researchers on this issue is whether there are ways of enhancing family choice that do not threaten our ability to protect the public interest in high standards, support for national cultural values, and professionally sound school program designs.

Property rights or cultural identity?

Individual students and their advocates in the policy community confront the question of whether education in the next century will be viewed primarily in economic or in cultural terms. Viewed economically, students have a property interest in education[2] – schooling represents an investment in their future and serves as the primary means of access to wealth and social status in an advanced industrial society. Culturally, education serves a dual role – it is a potent means for transmitting family and community norms, and it provides individual students with the capacity to critically appraise their cultural heritage and develop for themselves a personal and cultural identity.

In pursuit of their property rights, students can be expected to demand educational programs that prepare them for entry into the labor market. These demands will often conflict, however, with community culture values and may require that children become alienated from parental or neighborhood cultural norms in order to accept the norms of mobility and workplace behavior needed for economic success. Recent experience, supported by significant research evidence, indicates that cultural alienation is not simply the high price

children from minority sub-cultures must pay for economic viability. In fact, cultural alienation may be the primary reason why schools typically fail to prepare minority students for economic success. Cultural identity appears to be the foundation of economic success, not a competing goal for education. Hence the issue for the next century is how to develop schools where children acquire a cultural foundation upon which to build an economically viable set of attitudes and labor market skills. Schools will not achieve these twin goals by dismissing or suppressing family cultures – they will have to find ways of combining the strengths of family background with access to the broader national culture in ways that motivate and empower rather than alienating children who come to them.

Technology as problem or as solution?

While researchers and educational planners need to grapple with all of the key questions described above, they will play a special role in relation to the issue of technology. As technological change induces dramatic changes in the eceonomy and in the life-styles of individuals and communities around the globe, technology presents itself as a critical problem for educators. Viewed from this perspective, the issue is how schooling can keep up with workplace and life-style changes in order to prepare students for the adult world of their own future rather than reproducing the obsolescent one of their parents generation.

Technological change presents an equally important challenge to the educational process itself. Today's schools continue to utilize technologies that are hundreds or thousands of years old – teacher lectures, class discussions, chalk boards, printed textbooks, laboratory demonstrations, individual grades, etc. It is important to consider whether recent changes in information technologies will make these traditional technologies (and perhaps the organizational forms through which they are utilized) obsolete. Throughout the twentieth century information technology changes have been repeatedly hailed as harbingers of educational change, only to prove inadequate to the task of fundamental educational process change. Radio, photographs, audio tape recording, film strips, overhead projectors, moving pictures, television, xerography and microcomputers have each been heralded as breakthrough technologies. Up to this point, only photographs and the various relatives of xerography have made fundamental changes in either curriculum content or pedagogical practice.

As information technologies become less costly and educators learn how to combine them effectively, educational changes may become more far reaching and dramatic. The microcomputer, linked to high resolution television and the mass storage capacity of optical laser disks, may provide a powerful new instructional tool. If this is so, however, its importance in the classroom has yet to be proven. In his chapter, Phillip Piele makes a convincing case that technological developments associated with distance learning (interactive video) are likely to be more important than microcomputer-based instructional innovations during the remaining years of this century. Whether distance learning or microcomputer-based pedagogical change turns out to be the most important route to the incorporation of new information technologies into the educational process, it is important to recognize the paucity of good research on either the educational effects or the organizational implications of these developments. Researchers and policy planners need to mount a long term co-operative effort aimed at testing and evaluating these changes – examining their potential for keeping school programs in touch with rapidly changing social and economic technology shifts as well as their role in supporting or redirecting traditional instructional processes.

Conclusion

With three decades of increasingly sophisticated political research and analysis to draw upon, professional educators and school policy-makers have come to fully appreciate the essentially political character of public education. We now recognize that both the content and the form of schooling is determined through the conflicts and coalitions found at the core of local, state and national political systems. With that knowledge has come an awareness that public support and organizational effectiveness depend on identifying and resolving fundamental questions regarding the goals of education and the strategies to be utilized in pursuing those goals.

The chapters of this volume provide a broad introduction to a number of key issues. Both space and intellectual limitations have forced us to select a few of the most salient issues for analysis. As the Politics of Education Association enters its third decade, there is ample work left to be done.

In closing, we should remind ourselves that political insight and analysis do not guarantee public virtue. The potentials for abuse of the public trust are enormous. As this chapter is being written, daily disclosures of military procurement and housing development corruption in the US federal government underscore the potential for abuse by large, centralized and well financed public bureaucracies. In the same newspapers, however, reports of mismanagement and corruption in US savings and loan institutions demonstrate that private ownership and decentralization of power provide no better guarantees of success. Political research may point the way, but school operations are actually controlled by the daily interplay between an informed and energized citizenry willing to demand quality from, and offer political support to, a cadre of professional educators who accept responsibility for teaching and school administration.

Notes

1. These arguments were addressed in such Supreme Court cases as *Cochran et al. v. Louisiana State Board of Education*, 281 US 370 (1930), *Everson v. Board of Education*, 330 US 1 (1947), *McCollum v. Board of Education*, 333 US 203 (1948), *Engel v. Vitale*, 370 US 421 (1962), *School District of Abington v. Schempp*, 374 US 203 (1963), *Board of Education v. Allen*, 392 US 236 (1968), *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 403 US 602 (1971), *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 406 US 205 (1972), *Committee for Public Education and Religious Liberty v. Nyquist*, 413 US 756 (1973), *Committee for Public Education and Religious Liberty v. Regan*, 444 US 646 (1980) and *Mueller v. Allen*, 103 S.Ct 3026 (1983).
2. The United States Supreme Court, in its 1954 *Brown* decision, stated that, 'in these days, its doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity to an education' (347 US 483, 493). In 1975, in *Goss v. Lopez*, 419 US 565, the Court declared that students had a property interest in their education and due process was required before a student could be denied continued access to that education.

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